

ANNOUNCER: FUNDING FOR
"COUNTRY MUSIC" WAS PROVIDED

BY THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS

OF THE BETTER ANGELS SOCIETY:

THE BLAVATNIK FAMILY FOUNDATION,
THE SCHWARTZ/REISMAN FOUNDATION,
THE PFEIL FOUNDATION,

DIANE AND HAL BRIERLEY,
JOHN AND CATHERINE DEBS,

THE FULLERTON FAMILY
CHARITABLE FUND,

BY THE PERRY AND DONNA
GOLKIN FAMILY FOUNDATION,

JAY ALIX AND UNA JACKMAN,

MERCEDES T. BASS,

AND FRED AND DONNA SEIGEL

AND BY THESE ADDITIONAL MEMBERS.

[BOB WILLIS AND HIS TEXAS
PLAYBOYS' "NEW SAN ANTONIO
ROSE" PLAYING]

WILLIS:
OH, TEAR IT DOWN, MR. MAN.

TEAR IT DOWN NOW.

MAJOR FUNDING WAS PROVIDED
BY: THE ANNENBERG FOUNDATION;

BY THE ARTHUR VINING DAVIS
FOUNDATIONS,

DEDICATED TO STRENGTHENING
AMERICA'S FUTURE

THROUGH EDUCATION;

BY BELMONT UNIVERSITY,
WHERE STUDENTS CAN STUDY

MUSIC AND MUSIC BUSINESS
IN THE HEART OF MUSIC CITY;

BY THE SOUNDTRACK OF AMERICA--
MADE IN TENNESSEE--

TRAVEL INFORMATION
AT TNVACATION.COM;

BY THE METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT
OF NASHVILLE

AND DAVIDSON COUNTY;

BY ROSALIND P. WALTER;

BY THE CORPORATION
FOR PUBLIC BROADCASTING;

AND BY VIEWERS LIKE YOU.

THANK YOU.

â HEADING DOWN SOUTH
TO THE LAND OF THE PINE â

â THUMBING MY WAY INTO
NORTH CAROLINE â

â STARING UP THE ROAD,
PRAY TO GOD I SEE HEADLIGHTS â

â SO, ROCK ME, MAMA,
LIKE A WAGON WHEEL â

â ROCK ME, MAMA,
ANY WAY YOU FEEL â

â HEY, MAMA, ROCK ME

[CHEERING AND APPLAUSE]

["WILL THE CIRCLE BE
UNBROKEN" PLAYING]

CONGREGATION: â WILL THE CIRCLE
BE UNBROKEN â

â BY AND BY, LORD,
BY AND BY? â

â THERE'S A BETTER
HOME A-WAITING â

â IN THE SKY, LORD,
IN THE SKY â

WOMAN: WHOO!

â WILL THE CIRCLE BE UNBROKEN?

[CHORUS FADES OUT;
LEON RUSSELL PLAYING PIANO]

RUSSELL AND CHORUS:
â IN THE SKY, LORD, IN THE SKY

â WILL THE CIRCLE
BE UNBROKEN â

â BY AND BY, LORD,
BY AND BY? â

â THERE'S A BETTER
HOME A-WAITING â

â IN THE SKY, LORD,
IN THE SKY â

â WELL, I WAS STANDING
BY MY WINDOW â

â ON A COLD, DAMP,
RAINY DAY... â

TRICIA YEARWOOD:
"WILL THE CIRCLE BE UNBROKEN?"

THAT SONG REALLY ENCOMPASSES

WHAT COUNTRY MUSIC
IS ABOUT BECAUSE OF HOW

TIMELESS IT IS AND HOW IT
JUST NEVER--IT CHANGES, BUT,

IN A WAY, IT DOESN'T
CHANGE AT ALL.

RUSSELL: â WILL THE CIRCLE
BE UNBROKEN? â

MARTY STUART: AND IT HAS
BEEN DONE EVERY WAY YOU
CAN IMAGINE TO DO A SONG.

IT IS SO FAMOUS AND IT IS SO
OFTEN SUNG, I THINK IT GETS

CRUSHED BENEATH THE WEIGHT
OF ITS OWN FAME SOMETIMES.

RUSSELL: â IN THE SKY,
LORD, IN... â

YEARWOOD: IT'S A SONG
THAT STARTS OFF WITH

SOMEONE WHO IS DEAD

AND BEING BURIED
AND CARRIED AWAY.

IT'S NOT LIKE AN UPLIFTING,
POSITIVE SONG, ALTHOUGH IT IS

BECAUSE HOW SAD THIS
MOMENT IS, BUT THERE'S
A BETTER HOME A-WAITING...

RUSSELL: "BY AND BY, LORD...

YEARWOOD: AND IT IS A SONG
ABOUT SADNESS, HOPE,

REDEMPTION, LOVE.

RUSSELL: "THERE'S A BETTER
HOME A-WAIT... "

YEARWOOD: IT'S ABOUT HOW WE'RE
ALL GONNA BE TOGETHER.

YOU NEVER, EVER HEAR THAT SONG
WITHOUT A CHORUS OF PEOPLE

SINGING IT.

RUSSELL: WHOA!

"WILL THE CIRCLE BE UNBROKEN

"BY AND BY,
OH, BY AND BY? "

"THERE'S A BETTER
HOME A-WAITING "

"IN THE SKY,
WHOA, IN THE SKY "

"WHOO, YEAH

CHORUS: "OOH

[JOAN BAEZ & THE JORDANAIRE'S'
"WILL THE CIRCLE BE UNBROKEN?"
PLAYING]

"WILL THE CIRCLE
BE UNBROKEN "

"BY AND BY, LORD,
BY AND BY? "

â THERE'S A BETTER
HOME A-WAITING â

â IN THE SKY, LORD,
IN THE SKY â

[PROTESTORS CHANTING]

[DISTANT GUNFIRE]

FIRE!

NARRATOR: BY 1968, WITH THE
WAR IN VIETNAM INTENSIFYING,

AMERICA WAS MORE DIVIDED
THAN IT HAD EVER BEEN SINCE

THE CIVIL WAR.

THE WOUNDS THAT THE NATION
SEEMED TO BE SUFFERING--

AND INFLICTING ON ITSELF--
SOMETIMES APPEARED
TOO DEEP TO HEAL.

THE GULF BETWEEN GENERATIONS
SOMETIMES SEEMED TOO WIDE

TO BE BRIDGED.

MORE AND MORE PEOPLE, FROM
ALL WALKS OF LIFE, FELT THEIR

VOICES WERE NOT BEING HEARD.

COUNTRY MUSIC WAS NOT
IMMUNE TO THE DIVISIONS.

A YOUNG POET AND TROUBADOUR
WOULD REJECT THE PATH HIS

PARENTS HAD CHOSEN FOR HIM,
AND IN NASHVILLE FIND

SALVATION IN HIS ART, BRINGING
TO COUNTRY MUSIC AN HONESTY

AND LYRICISM
RARELY HEARD BEFORE.

A RESTLESS REBEL WHO HAD BEEN
EXPELLED FROM THE GRAND OLE OPRY

WOULD TRIUMPHANTLY RETURN
TO ITS STAGE, THEN WELCOME

OTHERS FROM EVERY STYLE
OF MUSIC TO JOIN HIM.

TWO REMARKABLE SINGERS,
PURSUED AND BESET BY THEIR OWN

INNER DEMONS, WOULD TURN THEIR
TROUBLES INTO SONGS AND FIND,

FOR A TIME, SOME PEACE
WITH EACH OTHER.

AND JUST WHEN ONE OF THE MOST
TRADITIONAL FORMS OF COUNTRY

MUSIC SEEMED TO HAVE BEEN LEFT
BEHIND, IT WOULD RESURFACE

AND THEN FIND A WAY TO BRING
THE GENERATIONS TOGETHER.

BAEZ & THE JORDANAIRE:
"WILL THE CIRCLE BE UNBROKEN

"BY AND BY, LORD,
BY AND BY?"

"THERE'S A BETTER
HOME A-WAITING"

"IN THE SKY, LORD,
IN THE SKY..."

VINCE GILL: THAT'S WHAT
THEY SAY, THE CIRCLE.

IT SHOULD STAY UNBROKEN.

AND THAT'S THE WAY
I'VE SEEN LIFE WORK.

YOU KNOW, I'VE REALLY SEEN
IT WORK IN CIRCLES.

AND IT'S KIND OF
NEAT, WHEN IT--

WHEN SOMETHING
COMES BACK AROUND.

AND THE MUSIC COMES
BACK AROUND.

IT STRAYS FROM--MAYBE
A STRETCH WILL GO THROUGH

WHERE IT'S NOT AS TRADITIONAL
AS YOU LIKE, AND THEN IT WILL

FIND ITS WAY BACK TO IT.

BAEZ & THE JORDANAIREs:
â€”a ...BETTER HOME A-WAITING

â€”a IN THE SKY, LORD,
IN THE SKY â€”a

RALPH STANLEY: â€”a POLLY,
PRETTY POLLY â€”a

â€”a WOULD YOU THINK ME UNKIND?

â€”a LET ME SET BESIDE YOU,
TELL YOU MY MIND â€”a

â€”a WELL, MY MIND IS TO MARRY
AND NEVER TO PART... â€”a

RICKY SKAGGS:
THERE WAS DEFINITELY A TIME

THAT BLUEGRASS, YOU KNOW,
GOT MARGINALIZED.

I DON'T KNOW WHO THE ALIEN
BRANCHILD WAS THAT CAME UP

WITH THE IDEA THAT, "HEY,
WE NEED TO SEPARATE BLUEGRASS

AND COUNTRY ON RADIO."

â€”a

NARRATOR: BY THE LATE SIXTIES,
BLUEGRASS AND STRING BAND MUSIC

HAD ALL BUT DISAPPEARED
FROM COUNTRY RADIO STATIONS,

WHERE THE ELECTRIFIED
BAKERSFIELD SOUND AND SMOOTHER

NASHVILLE SOUND
STILL HELD SWAY.

EDDIE STUBBS: BLUEGRASS MUSIC
WAS ALL PART OF COUNTRY MUSIC,

BUT ABOUT 1963, WE START
SEEING THIS PHASING OUT.

THE MUSIC WAS CHANGING

IN A BIG-TIME WAY.

AND IF YOU HAD AN ACOUSTIC BAND,
LIKE THE STANLEY BROTHERS,

AND BEING PLAYED BACK TO BACK
WITH A RECORD BY SKEETER DAVIS,

SAY, "THE END OF THE WORLD,"
WITH THE VOICES AND THE STRINGS,

I MEAN, IT WAS
A HEAD-ON COLLISION.

AND A PROGRAM DIRECTOR
WOULD COME IN AND SAY,

"WHAT IN THE WORLD WAS THAT?"

"WELL, THAT WAS THE
LATEST BLUEGRASS RECORD."

"WELL, NO MORE BLUEGRASS.
WE DON'T WANT ANY OF THAT."

[NEW LOST CITY RAMBLERS
YODELING ON "ON SOME
FOGGY MOUNTAIN TOP"]

â€ YEE-HAH!

NARRATOR: BUT OLD-TIME MUSIC
BEGAN TO FIND NEW FANS AMONG

MIDDLE-CLASS COLLEGE STUDENTS
CAUGHT UP IN THE FOLK REVIVAL.

GROUPS LIKE THE NEW LOST CITY
RAMBLERS HELPED LEAD THEM BACK

TO COUNTRY MUSIC'S ROOTS.

â€ NOW, IF YOU SEE
THAT GIRL OF MINE â€

â€ THERE'S SOMETHING
I WANT YOU TO TELL HER... â€

BILL C. MALONE:
THEY WERE ACTUALLY EMBRACING
HILLBILLY MUSIC AND RACE MUSIC

AND GOSPEL MUSIC
AND CAJUN MUSIC.

IT WAS EXCITING.

IT WAS SO OLD THAT IT WAS NEW.

ALL: "I'D SAIL AWAY
TO THE WEST..."

MALONE: AND, ONCE THAT HAPPENED,
THEN THE NEXT STEP IS

FOR PEOPLE TO GO BACK AND
START FINDING RECORDS BY THE

PEOPLE FROM WHOM THE NEW LOST
CITY RAMBLERS HAD BORROWED.

[YODELING]

"LET'S GO SEE IF WE CAN FIND
A CARTER FAMILY RECORD."

"LET'S SEE IF WE CAN FIND SOME
'UNCLE DAVE' MACON RECORDS,"

AND SO ON.

MAN: MAYBELLE CARTER!

NARRATOR: MAYBELLE CARTER,
OF THE ORIGINAL CARTER FAMILY,

HAD BEEN MOONLIGHTING
AS A PRACTICAL NURSE

IN A NASHVILLE HOSPITAL,
WHEN THE NEW LOST CITY RAMBLERS

TOOK HER WITH THEM TO PLAY AT
THE NEWPORT FOLK FESTIVAL.

[PLAYING "LIBERTY DANCE"]

"

SOON, FESTIVALS DEDICATED
EXCLUSIVELY TO BLUEGRASS MUSIC

BEGAN SPROUTING UP IN PLACES AS
DIVERSE AS TINY LURAY, VIRGINIA,

AND METROPOLITAN CHICAGO.

COMBINED WITH CONCERTS ON
COLLEGE CAMPUSES, THEY BECAME

THE PRINCIPAL LIFELINE, KEEPING
MANY STRING BANDS AFLOAT.

MALONE: SO BLUEGRASS BEGAN TO

CREATE ITS OWN WORLD.

BLUEGRASS CONTINUED TO BE,
IN MY OPINION, THE MOST

AUTHENTIC FORM OF COUNTRY
MUSIC, THE MOST REFLECTIVE

OF ITS ROOTS, BUT
NEVERTHELESS, IT STILL HAD TO

COME UP WITH SOMETHING DIFFERENT
IN ORDER TO SURVIVE.

NARRATOR: THE EXCEPTION WAS
LESTER FLATT AND EARL SCRUGGS,

WHO HAD ECLIPSED EVERY
OTHER BLUEGRASS ACT,

INCLUDING BILL MONROE'S.

FLATT: "COME AND LISTEN TO
MY STORY ABOUT A MAN NAMED JED"

"A POOR MOUNTAINEER,
BARELY..."

NARRATOR: THEIR MANAGER,
EARL'S WIFE LOUISE,
PERSUADED THEM TO HELP

WITH THE THEME SONG OF A NEW
TELEVISION COMEDY CALLED

"THE BEVERLY HILLBILLIES."

FLATT: "... BLACK GOLD

NARRATOR: "WE'D WORKED
SO HARD TO GET AWAY FROM
THAT IMAGE," EARL SAID,

BUT LOUISE CONVINCED THEM
THAT THE MAIN CHARACTERS

WERE PORTRAYED MORE FAVORABLY
THAN THE CITY SLICKERS.

FLATT: "SO THEY LOADED UP
THE TRUCK"

"AND THEY MOVED TO BEVERLY

ANNOUNCER: "THE BEVERLY
HILLBILLIES"!

â

NARRATOR: "THE BALLAD OF
JED CLAMPETT" HIT NUMBER-ONE
ON THE COUNTRY CHARTS--

UNHEARD OF AT THAT TIME
FOR A BLUEGRASS BAND.

"THE SONG WASN'T OUR
FAVORITE," FLATT CONCEDED,

BUT "AFTER IT SOLD 100,000
COPIES, WE JUST LEARNED

TO LOVE IT."

FLATT:
â Y'ALL COME BACK NOW, Y'HEAR?

[ALARM RINGING;
MAN SHOUTING]

[FLATT & SCRUGGS PLAYING
"FOGGY MOUNTAIN BREAKDOWN"]

NARRATOR: A FEW YEARS
LATER, WARREN BEATTY
USED THEIR RECORDING OF

"FOGGY MOUNTAIN BREAKDOWN"
IN THE HIT MOVIE
"BONNIE AND CLYDE."

â

LET'S GET
SOME LEEWAY.

NARRATOR: THE EXPOSURE FROM THE
FILM TRANSFORMED THE SONG INTO

THE NATION'S BEST-KNOWN
BLUEGRASS TUNE.

THE FUNNY THING ABOUT BLUEGRASS
IS WHEN I STARTED PLAYING IT,

IN THE MID-SIXTIES,
FIRST THING YOU HEARD WAS,

"BLUEGRASS IS GONNA
BE BIG THIS YEAR!"

AND NEXT YEAR, "WELL, BLUEGRASS
WILL BE BIG THIS YEAR!"

NOT MUCH WOULD HAPPEN.

"OH, 'BONNIE AND CLYDE.'"

"'FOGGY MOUNTAIN BREAKDOWN'S'

"ON POP RADIO,
AND IT'S RESPECTED.

IT'S GONNA BE
BIG THIS YEAR."

NOTHING FOR A COUPLE YEARS.

"DUELING BANJOS" COMES OUT.

"BLUEGRASS WILL BE
BIG THIS YEAR."

THE THING ABOUT BLUEGRASS
IS IT'S ALWAYS BEEN BIG.

IF YOU LOOK AT ALL THESE
CAREERS, THEY ALL KIND OF WENT

UP VERY SLOWLY.

THEY DIDN'T HAVE POP SUCCESS
AND THEN DISAPPEAR.

BUT IT'S JUST BEEN
KIND OF MOVING ALONG,

AND THEY'RE DOING FINE,
THANK YOU.

â€

GEORGE JONES:
â€ WHEN YOU LEFT

â€ I THOUGHT THAT I WOULD
SOON GET OVER YOU â€

â€ EVEN TOLD MYSELF THAT
I'D FIND SOMEBODY, TOO â€

RAY WALKER:
THE MINUTE WE HEARD HIM,

WE'D NEVER HEARD
A VOICE LIKE THAT.

â€ ...HAVE COME AND GONE
BUT NOT YOUR MEMORY â€

GEORGE JONES.

JONES: "I'LL BE OVER YOU
WHEN THE GRASS..."

I'M NOT SURE WHETHER HE
DIDN'T KNOW HE WAS IMPORTANT

OR FOUGHT BEING IMPORTANT.

"YES, I'LL BE OVER YOU

WHEN YOU'RE
STANDING OVER ME"

BRENDA LEE: WELL, I THINK
THE TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS
THAT GEORGE WENT THROUGH

HAD EVERYTHING TO
DO WITH HIS MUSIC.

I THINK WHEN HE WAS HURTING,
YOU COULD HEAR IT IN A SONG.

"DON'T EXPECT TO HEAR ME SAY
THAT I STILL LOVE YOU THEN"

I ALWAYS SAY...GEORGE
DIDN'T SING COUNTRY SONGS.

GEORGE WAS A COUNTRY SONG.

"FOR I'LL BE OVER YOU

WHEN THE GRASS
GROWS OVER ME"

[CHEERING AND APPLAUSE]

NARRATOR: "IF I COULD
HAVE MADE A LIVING

"DOING SOME OTHER THINGS,
I KNOW I WOULD HAVE

BEEN A LOT HAPPIER,"
GEORGE JONES ONCE SAID,

"BUT YOU DON'T GET THAT
IN THIS BUSINESS."

JONES: "BENEATH STILL WATERS

THERE'S A STRONG UNDERTOW

NARRATOR: SINGING HAD HELPED
RAISE HIM FROM THE POVERTY OF

HIS CHILDHOOD, BUT NEVER
LET HIM ESCAPE ITS MOST

PAINFUL MEMORIES.

JONES: "WHAT THE
DEEP WATER KNOWS"

NARRATOR: BORN IN 1931

IN A LOG SHACK IN SOUTHEAST
TEXAS, THE YOUNGEST

OF 8 CHILDREN, JONES
INHERITED A GIFT OF MUSIC FROM

HIS MOTHER'S FAMILY.

JONES: "...SOMETHING'S WRONG

NARRATOR:
BUT HIS FATHER HAD A WEAKNESS
FOR HARD LIQUOR, WHICH TURNED

HIM MEAN AND UNCONTROLLABLY
VIOLENT.

RETURNING HOME DRUNK MANY
NIGHTS, HE WOULD ROUST YOUNG

GEORGE FROM BED
AND DEMAND SOME SONGS,

BELT-WHIPPING THE BOY
IF HE HESITATED.

GEORGE WOULD PERFORM WITH
TEARS STREAMING DOWN HIS FACE.

JONES: "...SOON BE LEAVING ME

NARRATOR:
WHEN THE FAMILY MOVED TO A
GOVERNMENT HOUSING PROJECT

IN BEAUMONT, THE FATHER TOOK HIS
11-YEAR-OLD SON TO A BUS STOP

AND FORCED HIM TO SING
FOR STRANGERS PASSING BY

AND THEN CONFISCATED
THE COINS THEY TOSSED
INTO GEORGE'S TIN CUP

TO GO ON A BENDER.

JONES: "OOH, WHITE LIGHTNING

"WELL, I ASKED MY OLD PAPPY
WHY HE CALLED..."

NARRATOR: BY THE TIME
HE WAS IN HIS MID TEENS,

JONES HAD QUIT SCHOOL
AND WAS A GOOD ENOUGH SINGER

TO PERFORM IN LOCAL BARS
FOR TIPS AND FREE BEER.

JONES: "...MY FACE
TURNED BLUE"

NARRATOR: THEY CALLED HIM
"POSSUM" BECAUSE OF HIS
CLOSE-SET EYES,

TURNED UP NOSE,
AND TIGHT-LIPPED GRIN.

BILLY SHERILL: HAVE YOU EVER
LOOKED AT HIM REAL CLOSE?

HE LOOKS LIKE A POSSUM,
LITTLE BEADY EYES.

HE KNOWS HE LOOKS
LIKE A POSSUM.

BOTH: "...BUT MY PAPPY
KEPT ON COOKIN'"

"PHOO....WHITE LIGHTNIN'

NARRATOR: GEORGE JONES'
FIRST NUMBER-ONE HIT,
"WHITE LIGHTNIN',"

WAS RELEASED IN 1959.

HE WAS WELL INTO A SECOND
UNHAPPY MARRIAGE BY THEN.

JONES: "I HEARD HIM A-MOANIN'
AS HE HIT..."

NARRATOR: ON THE ROAD,
HE HAD DEVELOPED
HIS OWN TASTE FOR WHISKEY

AND WAS HAVING THE SAME
TROUBLES WITH IT AS HIS FATHER.

JONES:
" ... WHITE LIGHTNIN'

AT ONE CONCERT, HE WAS SO
DRUNK HE FELL OFF THE STAGE.

JONES: " PHOO...

NARRATOR:
SOMETIMES JONES WOULD SIMPLY
DISAPPEAR, UNTIL HIS

BANDMATES FINALLY FOUND HIM,
SITTING ALONE, DRINKING

IN A DARK CORNER OF A BAR.

A PRODUCER AT STARDAY RECORDS
WANTED HIM TO TRY TO DEVELOP

HIS OWN STYLE.

HE BELIEVED JONES COULD BE
A MAJOR STAR, IF HE STOPPED

IMITATING HIS MUSICAL HEROES--
ROY ACUFF, HANK WILLIAMS,

AND LEFTY FRIZZELL.

JONES: " SHE THINKS I...

NARRATOR: HE FOUND THAT STYLE--

HOLDING BACK THE POWER
OF HIS VOICE UNTIL

THE DRAMA OF THE SONG REQUIRED
IT, BENDING AND EMBROIDERING

NOTES, ALL THE WHILE
SINGING THROUGH HIS NEARLY

CLENCHED TEETH.

JONES: " JUST BECAUSE I ASKED
A FRIEND ABOUT HER "

" JUST BECAUSE I SPOKE
HER NAME SOMEWHERE "

LLOYD GREEN: HE HAD THIS QUALITY
OF A MUSICAL INSTRUMENT.

JONES: " ...BECAUSE
I RANG HER NUMBER... "

HE HAD COMPLETE CONTROL
OF HIS VOICE,

MUCH LIKE AN OPERATIC SINGER,
EXCEPT IT WAS COUNTRY.

JONES: "SHE THINKS
I STILL CARE"

NARRATOR: HE APPROACHED EACH
RECORDING, HE SAID, "UNTIL

"YOU'RE JUST LIKE THE PEOPLE IN
THE SONG, AND YOU'RE LIVING IT

"AND THEIR PROBLEMS BECOME YOUR
PROBLEMS, UNTIL YOU'RE LOST

IN THE SONG AND IT JUST TAKES
EVERYTHING OUT OF YOU."

WHEN JONES RECORDED IN
NASHVILLE, OTHER MUSICIANS

STARTED COMING TO HIS
SESSIONS, JUST TO LISTEN

TO HIM SING.

JONES: "OH, WHERE...

STUBBS: IN THE SIXTIES, HE GOT
TO A POINT WHERE HE WAS MAKING

\$1,000 A NIGHT, WHICH WAS
A LOT OF MONEY

FOR A COUNTRY ARTIST.

HE HAD THE FLAT-TOP HAIRCUT.

HE WAS SINGING HUNGRY.

AND YOU THINK ABOUT
MONUMENTAL RECORDS LIKE
"A GIRL I USED TO KNOW,"

"SHE THINKS I STILL CARE,"
"YOU COMB HER HAIR,"

"THE RACE IS ON."

THESE ARE VERY, VERY IMPORTANT
RECORDS AT THAT POINT IN TIME.

GEORGE WAS WIDE-OPEN

IN THOSE DAYS.

HE WAS LIVING HARD.

NARRATOR: IN 1968, HIS
SECOND WIFE, WHO DIDN'T DRINK

AND DIDN'T REALLY LIKE COUNTRY
MUSIC, DIVORCED HIM, AND HE

MOVED FROM TEXAS TO NASHVILLE.

HE OPENED A NIGHTCLUB ON LOWER
BROADWAY CALLED POSSUM HOLLER

AND MARKETED A LINE OF
SOUVENIRS, INCLUDING WOMEN'S

LINGERIE CALLED
POSSUM PANTIES.

JONES WAS 37 YEARS OLD
AND A MAJOR STAR.

HE TOLD HIS FRIENDS, "YOU
CAN JUST SAY OLE POSSUM AIN'T

GETTIN' MARRIED AGAIN
UNTIL HE'S 69."

JONES: "â€¦STILL CARE

[APPLAUSE]

"â€¦ WELL, I'M GONNA GET ON
THE OLD TURNPIKE "â€¦

"â€¦ AND I'M GONNA RIDE

"â€¦ I'M GONNA LEAVE THIS TOWN
TILL YOU DECIDE WHICH ONE... "â€¦

NARRATOR: GEORGE JONES' VOW
TO STAY SINGLE FOR THE NEXT

32 YEARS
LASTED LESS THAN ONE.

JONES AND HIS NEW WIFE SHARED
A NUMBER OF THINGS IN COMMON.

BOTH HAD ALREADY BEEN
MARRIED TWICE BEFORE.

BOTH HAD EXTRAORDINARY VOICES.

JONES: SING A LITTLE

BIT OF IT.

“ WE WERE WATCHING TV,
ERNEST TUBB WAS SINGIN' LOUD ”

“ I SAID,
"HE'S THE MAN FOR ME" ”

“ I LOVE HIM,
THERE'S NO DOUBT ”

“ I'M LEAVIN' YOU
AND GOIN' NOW TO
FIND OUT WHERE HE'S AT ”

“ AND IF I CAN'T FIND HIM,
I'LL SETTLE FOR THAT
BLUEGRASS LESTER FLATT ”

NARRATOR:
AND TAMMY WYNETTE'S PERSONAL
LIFE SEEMED JUST AS FRAGILE

AND TORMENTED AS
HER NEW HUSBAND'S.

LEE: TAMMY'S SNATCHES
AT HAPPINESS WERE FEW
AND FAR BETWEEN.

THAT IS WHAT I OBSERVED.

AND YOU ALWAYS WANTED HER TO
BE HAPPIER BECAUSE YOU FELT

LIKE SHE WASN'T,

AND YOU DIDN'T KNOW
HOW TO FIX IT.

AND YOU DIDN'T KNOW HOW TO ASK
HER IF YOU COULD FIX IT.

[ACOUSTIC GUITAR PLAYING
"WILL THE CIRCLE BE UNBROKEN?"]

NARRATOR: BORN
VIRGINIA WYNETTE PUGH,

IN ITAWAMBA COUNTY,
MISSISSIPPI, CLOSE TO

THE ALABAMA BORDER, SHE HAD
BEEN RAISED ON A COTTON FARM

BY HER GRANDPARENTS.

HER FATHER HAD DIED BEFORE SHE
WAS 1, AND HER MOTHER HAD MOVED

TO MEMPHIS TO WORK IN
A DEFENSE FACTORY DURING

WORLD WAR II.

SHE MARRIED AT AGE 17,
A MONTH BEFORE HER
HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION.

BY THE TIME SHE TURNED 23,
SHE WAS THE MOTHER OF 3 GIRLS,

DIVORCING HER HUSBAND
AND LIVING IN BIRMINGHAM,

MAKING \$45 A WEEK BY SINGING
ON A LOCAL TELEVISION SHOW

EARLY EACH MORNING, BEFORE
GOING TO WORK ALL DAY

AT A BEAUTY SALON.

IN 1966, SHE PACKED HER
CHILDREN AND A FEW BELONGINGS

INTO HER CAR AND MOVED TO
NASHVILLE, WHERE SHE STARTED

MAKING THE ROUNDS ALONG MUSIC
ROW, HOPING SOMEONE WOULD SIGN

HER TO A CONTRACT.

WHEN AN EXECUTIVE OFFERED HER
THAT POSSIBILITY IN EXCHANGE FOR
SEXUAL FAVORS, SHE RAN OUT.

EVENTUALLY, SHE BEGAN SHOWING UP
AT THE OFFICE OF BILLY SHERRILL,

A YOUNG PRODUCER
AT EPIC RECORDS.

SHERRILL: ANOTHER
RECORD PRODUCER,

WHO WILL BE FOREVER NAMELESS,
SHE HAD SEEN HIM AND HE MADE

SOME KIND OF DEROGATORY
REMARKS ABOUT THEIR

RELATIONSHIP, AND IT MADE ME

REALLY, REALLY MAD AT HIM.

SO THE NEXT TIME SHE CAME IN,
I SAID, "I'VE GOT THIS SONG.

WE'LL RECORD THIS."

SHE SAID, "YOU WOULDN'T
BE KIDDING ME, WOULD YOU?"

I SAID,
"YOU LEARN THE SONG,

AND TOMORROW WE'LL MAKE
A LITTLE HISTORY."

WYNETTE:
â€”a JUST FOLLOW THE STAIRWAY

â€”a TO THIS LONELY
WORLD OF MINE â€”a

â€”a YOU'LL FIND ME
WAITIN' HERE â€”a

â€”a IN APARTMENT NUMBER 9

SHERRILL:
AT THAT POINT, HER NAME
WAS VIRGINIA WYNETTE PUGH.

I SAID, "PUGH'S THE UGLIEST
NAME I'VE EVER HEARD."

SHE SAID, "WELL, I DON'T
KNOW WHAT ELSE TO--

WHAT DO YOU WANT ME TO BE?"

I SAID, "I ALWAYS
LOVED THE NAME TAMMY.

"THERE'S A MOVIE OUT,
'TAMMY AND THE BACHELOR.'

"LET'S CALL YOU TAMMY AND
FORGET PUGH AND USE YOUR
MIDDLE NAME WYNETTE.

YOU'LL--FROM NOW ON,
YOU'LL BE TAMMY WYNETTE."

WYNETTE: â€”a ...YOUR ARMS
AROUND ME â€”a

â€”a AND THE SUN
WILL NEVER SHINE â€”a

â€” IN APARTMENT NUMBER 9

NARRATOR: "APARTMENT #9"
DID NOT MAKE HISTORY,

BUT MUSICIANS
IN NASHVILLE TOOK NOTICE

OF THE NEW SINGER.

WYNETTE: â€” AND AFTER ALL
THE PLANS WE MADE â€”

â€” YOU JUST...

THAT TEARDROP IN HER
VOICE JUST SAID IT ALL.

I MEAN, YOU COULD HEAR THE HURT
AND THE PAIN AND THE WANTING.

TAMMY WAS ONE OF THOSE PEOPLE
THAT YOU ALWAYS JUST WANTED TO

HUG AND ENVELOP, AND SAY
"IT'S GONNA BE ALL RIGHT.

IT'S GONNA BE FINE."

WYNETTE: â€” ...WILL NEVER SHINE

LORETTA LYNN: YEAH,
WHAT A VOICE.

WYNETTE: â€” ...NUMBER 9

THAT WAS HER FIRST RECORD.

AND I HEARD IT ON
THE RADIO AND I SAID,

"I GOT COMPETITION."

["D-I-V-O-R-C-E" PLAYING]

NARRATOR: BILLY SHERRILL
HAD BEEN INSPIRED BY

THE RICH ARRANGEMENTS THAT
ROCK PRODUCER PHIL SPECTOR WAS

CREATING IN LOS ANGELES,
KNOWN AS THE "WALL OF SOUND."

WHEN SHERRILL WRAPPED HIS OWN
VERSION OF IT AROUND

TAMMY WYNETTE'S DYNAMIC VOICE,
THE RESULT WAS A STEADY STRING

OF NUMBER-ONE COUNTRY HITS.

WYNETTE: "I ...BECOMES
FINAL TODAY I"

"I ME AND LITTLE J-O-E

"I WILL BE GOIN' AWAY...

NARRATOR: ONE OF THEM WAS
WRITTEN BY BOBBY BRADDOCK
AND CURLY PUTMAN,

IN WHICH A MOTHER
TRIES TO SHIELD HER SON FROM

THE AGONY OF THE BREAKUP OF
HER MARRIAGE BY SPELLING OUT

WORDS LIKE "DIVORCE"
AND "CUSTODY."

WYNETTE: "I ...THIS
D-I-V-O-R-C-E I"

NARRATOR: THE SONG,
WYNETTE WOULD SAY,
"FIT MY LIFE COMPLETELY."

WHEN IT HIT THE TOP OF THE
COUNTRY CHARTS, HER SECOND

MARRIAGE TO SONGWRITER
DON CHAPEL WAS BEGINNING

TO DISINTEGRATE.

BY THIS TIME, GEORGE JONES'
SECOND DIVORCE HAD JUST

BEEN FINALIZED.

THE TWO HAD GOTTEN TO
KNOW EACH OTHER PERFORMING

AT CONCERTS ON THE ROAD.

JONES, 11 YEARS OLDER,
WAS WYNETTE'S IDOL AS

A COUNTRY SINGER.

SHE HAD ALL OF HIS

SONG LYRICS HANDWRITTEN

IN A LOOSE-LEAF NOTEBOOK.

NARRATOR: ONE NIGHT,
JONES STOPPED

AT WYNETTE'S
AND CHAPEL'S HOUSE.

SHE HAD BEEN PLAYING JONES'
LATEST HIT, WRITTEN BY HER

HUSBAND, OVER AND OVER.

CHAPEL BEGAN
RANTING AND CUSSING.

JONES, WHO HAD BEEN DRINKING,
EXPLODED, TURNING OVER

A DINING TABLE AND TOSSING
A CHAIR THROUGH A WINDOW.

HE SHOUTED AT CHAPEL,
"YOU DON'T TALK TO HER

LIKE THAT."

"SHE'S MY WIFE," CHAPEL
ANSWERED, "WHAT THE HELL

BUSINESS IS IT OF YOURS?"

"BECAUSE I'M IN LOVE WITH
HER," JONES BLURTED OUT,

"AND SHE'S IN LOVE WITH ME,
AREN'T YOU, TAMMY?"

"YES," SHE ADMITTED, "I AM."

A FEW DAYS LATER, HE FLEW HER
TO MEXICO CITY SO SHE COULD

GET A QUICK DIVORCE.

WYNETTE: "SOMETIMES
IT'S HARD TO BE A WOMAN..."

NARRATOR: IN THE MIDST
OF ALL THE TURMOIL,

BILLY SHERRILL BROUGHT TAMMY
BACK INTO THE STUDIO

TO RECORD A SONG

THEY HAD CO-WRITTEN.

WYNETTE: "YOU'LL
HAVE BAD TIMES"

"AND HE'LL HAVE GOOD TIMES

"DOIN' THINGS THAT
YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND"

SHERRILL: I ALWAYS WANTED TO
WRITE A SONG ABOUT A WOMAN
TALKING TO ANOTHER WOMAN.

IT'S ALWAYS A GUY
TALKING ABOUT WOMEN,

WOMEN TALKING ABOUT GUYS.

AND I FIGURED IF A WOMAN
TALKED TO ANOTHER WOMAN,

WHAT WOULD SHE TELL HER?

WYNETTE:
"AND IF YOU LOVE HIM...

"SOMETIMES IT'S HARD TO BE A
WOMAN, GIVING ALL YOUR LOVE

"TO JUST ONE MAN.

"YOU'LL HAVE BAD TIMES, HE'LL
HAVE GOOD TIMES," AND ALL THAT.

SO "IF YOU LOVE HIM,
YOU'LL FORGIVE HIM,
SO STAND BY YOUR MAN."

WYNETTE: "STAND BY YOUR MAN

"GIVE HIM TWO ARMS
TO CLING TO"

"AND SOMETHING WARM
TO COME TO..."

NARRATOR: "STAND BY YOUR
MAN" WOULD BE TAMMY WYNETTE'S

BIGGEST RECORD EVER, SELLING
5 MILLION COPIES, EARNING

HER A GRAMMY, AND MAKING
HER THE COUNTRY MUSIC

ASSOCIATION'S FEMALE VOCALIST

OF THE YEAR, BEATING OUT

THE PREVIOUS RECIPIENT,
LORETTA LYNN.

JUST LIKE TO SAY THANKS
FOR MAKING THIS THE
GREATEST YEAR OF MY LIFE.

THANK YOU.

[APPLAUSE]

JEANNIE SEELY: ONE AMUSING THING
TO ME ABOUT TAMMY AND LORETTA--

I DON'T KNOW IF YOU
EVER NOTICED THIS--

TAMMY'S SONGS WERE ALWAYS

ABOUT STANDING BY YOUR MAN
AND TREATING YOUR MAN RIGHT,

AND BEING THERE FOR HIM,
AND YET SHE DIVORCED

SEVERAL TIMES.

LORETTA LYNN WAS ALWAYS
THREATENING, "DON'T COME HOME

DRINKING, DON'T DO THIS,
OR I'LL DO THAT."

AND SHE ALWAYS STAYED
WITH HER MAN, SO...

I ALWAYS KIND OF THOUGHT
THEY WROTE EACH OTHER'S SONGS.

NARRATOR: IN EARLY 1969,
GEORGE JONES AND TAMMY WYNETTE

WERE MARRIED AND BEGAN
TOURING TOGETHER IN A BUS

EMBLAZONED, "MR. AND MRS.
COUNTRY MUSIC."

WYNETTE: â€”a ...THE LOVE YOU CAN

NARRATOR:
JONES HAD HIS OWN HIT RISING
IN THE CHARTS AT THE TIME,

"I'LL SHARE MY

WORLD WITH YOU."

IT REACHED NUMBER 2.

"STAND BY YOUR MAN"
WAS STILL NUMBER 1.

WYNETTE: " ...MAN

NARRATOR: IN 1968, JOHNNY CASH

HAD REDEEMED HIS CAREER
BY RECORDING AN ALBUM

AT FOLSOM PRISON.

A YEAR LATER, HE HAD EVEN
GREATER SUCCESS WITH ONE

RECORDED LIVE AT SAN QUENTIN.

[JOHNNY CASH'S
"A BOY NAMED SUE" PLAYING]

CASH: " WELL, MY DADDY LEFT HOME
WHEN I WAS 3 "

" AND HE DIDN'T LEAVE MUCH
TO MA AND ME "

" JUST THIS OL' GUITAR
AND AN EMPTY BOTTLE OF BOOZE "

[INMATES CHEERING]

" NOW, I DON'T BLAME HIM
'CAUSE HE RUN AND HID "

" BUT THE MEANEST THING
THAT HE EVER DID "

" WAS BEFORE HE LEFT,
HE WENT AND NAMED ME SUE "

[LAUGHTER]

NARRATOR:
THE BIGGEST HIT ON THE ALBUM
WAS A NOVELTY TUNE CALLED

"A BOY NAMED SUE."

CASH: " ...ROAM FROM TOWN
TO TOWN TO HIDE MY SHAME "

NARRATOR:
IT WAS WRITTEN BY A FRIEND

OF CASH'S WITH AN UNLIKELY

BACKGROUND FOR
A COUNTRY SONGWRITER.

CASH: " ...AND KILL THAT MAN
THAT GIVE ME THAT AWFUL NAME "

[LAUGHTER]

NARRATOR: SHEL SILVERSTEIN
WAS A CARTOONIST FOR
"PLAYBOY" MAGAZINE

AND A CELEBRATED AUTHOR
OF CHILDREN'S BOOKS.

CASH: " ...AND HAD MYSELF
A BREW "

BOBBY BARE: HIS LOVE FOR
COUNTRY MUSIC WAS NOT FAKE.
IT WAS THE REAL DEAL.

HIS FAVORITE SINGER
AS A KID WAS ERNEST TUBB.

AND IT'S VERY DIFFICULT TO
IMAGINE A SMALL, JEWISH BOY

GROWING UP AROUND CHICAGO
LOVING ERNEST TUBB.

I MEAN IT'S STRANGE.

AND, OF COURSE,
SHEL WAS STRANGE.

CASH: " MY NAME IS SUE!
HOW DO YOU DO? "

" NOW YOU GONNA DIE!

YEAH!

BARE: BUT HE WAS
THE MOST CREATIVE PERSON
I EVER MET IN MY LIFE.

CASH: " ...THE EYES, AND HE WENT
DOWN, BUT TO MY SURPRISE "

" HE COME UP WITH A KNIFE
AND CUT OFF A PIECE OF MY EAR "

" BUT I BUSTED A CHAIR
RIGHT ACROSS HIS TEETH "

â AND WE CRASHED THROUGH
THE WALL AND INTO THE STREET â

â KICKIN' AND A-GOUGIN'
IN THE MUD AND THE BLOOD
AND THE BEER â

[LAUGHTER]

â AND I THINK ABOUT HIM
NOW AND THEN â

â EVERY TIME I TRY
AND EVERY TIME I WIN â

â AND IF I EVER HAVE A SON,
I THINK I'M GONNA NAME HIM â

â BILL OR GEORGE,
ANYTHING BUT SUE! â

â I STILL HATE
THAT NAME, YEAH â

[CHEERING AND APPLAUSE]

NARRATOR: "A BOY NAMED SUE"
WOULD BE CASH'S BIGGEST

SINGLE EVER.

CASH: THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

NARRATOR: IT WAS PART OF A LONG
TRADITION. COUNTRY MUSIC FANS

HAD ALWAYS ENJOYED SILLY AND
SOMETIMES SUGGESTIVE SONGS,

CALLED "HOKUM."

SHEL WROTE 20-SOME SONGS
ABOUT THE REALITIES OF GETTING

OLDER IN MUSIC CITY, AND WE DID
SONGS LIKE, "I'M AN OLD DOG,

BUT I CAN STILL
BURY A BONE."

I DID ONE CALLED "SHE'D RATHER
BE HOMELESS THAN HERE

AT HOME WITH ME."

WAYLON DID ONE CALLED "LORD,

AIN'T IT HARD WHEN IT AIN'T."

MEL DID ONE CALLED "I'M NOT
TOO OLD TO CUT THE MUSTARD,

JUST TOO TIRED TO
SPREAD IT AROUND."

â MAY THE BIRD OF PARADISE
FLY UP YOUR NOSE â

â MAY AN ELEPHANT
CARESS YOU WITH HIS TOES â

NARRATOR: THE ONLY NUMBER-ONE
SONG LITTLE JIMMY DICKENS

EVER HAD WAS "MAY THE BIRD OF
PARADISE FLY UP YOUR NOSE."

â ...FLY UP YOUR NOSE

NARRATOR: ROY CLARK HAD A HIT
WITH "THANK GOD AND GREYHOUND
YOU'RE GONE."

DICKENS: â MY LAUNDRY MAN
IS REALLY ON HIS TOES... â

NARRATOR: THEN THERE WAS
"SHE GOT THE GOLD MINE,
I GOT THE SHAFT."

DICKENS: â ...BILL
AMONG MY CLOTHES â

NARRATOR: "MY WIFE RAN
OFF WITH MY BEST FRIEND,
AND I SURE DO MISS HIM."

DICKENS: â ...BACK HIS DIME
FOR PHONIN'... â

NARRATOR: ONE OF CONWAY
TWITTY AND LORETTA LYNN'S
MOST POPULAR DUETS

WAS TITLED, "YOU'RE THE
REASON OUR KIDS ARE UGLY."

DICKENS: â ...UP YOUR NOSE

MY FAVORITE, AND IT CAME FROM
MY FATHER, "IT'S HARD TO KISS

THE LIPS AT NIGHT THAT CHEW
YOUR ASS OUT ALL DAY LONG."

PRETTY HARD TO BEAT.
HA HA HA!

DICKENS: " ...IN HER HOSE

" MAY THE BIRD OF PARADISE
FLY UP YOUR NOSE "

[BOB DYLAN PLAYING
"DESOLATION ROW"]

"

DYLAN: " THEY'RE SELLING
POSTCARDS OF THE HANGING "

" THEY'RE PAINTING
THE PASSPORTS BROWN "

" THE BEAUTY PARLOR
IS FILLED WITH SAILORS "

" THE CIRCUS IS IN TOWN...

NARRATOR: BACK IN 1965, DURING

A VISIT TO NEW YORK CITY,
CHARLIE McCOY, ONE

OF NASHVILLE'S "A-TEAM"
SESSION MUSICIANS, STOPPED BY

THE COLUMBIA RECORDS STUDIO,
WHERE PRODUCER BOB JOHNSTON

WAS MAKING A NEW ALBUM WITH BOB
DYLAN--"HIGHWAY 61 REVISITED."

DYLAN: " AND THE RIOT SQUAD,
THEY'RE RESTLESS "

" THEY NEED SOMEWHERE TO GO...

HE INTRODUCED ME TO BOB DYLAN,
AND BOB SAID, "I'M GETTING

"READY TO DO A SONG. WHY DON'T
YOU GRAB THAT GUITAR

AND PLAY ALONG?"

SO WE DID THE SONG, CALLED
"DESOLATION ROW," AND IT WAS

11 MINUTES LONG.

DYLAN: "CINDERELLA,
SHE SEEMS SO EASY"

"IT TAKES ONE TO KNOW ONE,"
SHE SMILES

McCOY: THERE WAS HIM AND MYSELF
AND AN ACOUSTIC BASS PLAYER,

WHO HAD ANOTHER
SESSION TO GO TO.

SO WE HAD TIME TO RECORD THE
SONG ONCE, LISTEN TO IT ONCE,

AND RECORD IT ONE MORE TIME,
AND THAT WAS IT. DONE.

I GUESS BOB JOHNSTON

WAS SAYING, "NOW DID YOU
SEE HOW EASY THAT WENT

"WITH THIS GUY?

THAT'S THE WAY THEY
DO IT IN NASHVILLE."

DYLAN: "...WHERE
LOVELY MERMAIDS FLOW"

AND NOBODY HAS TO
THINK TOO MUCH

ABOUT DESOLATION ROW

"

NARRATOR: THE NEXT YEAR,
WHEN DYLAN BECAME DISSATISFIED

WITH THE PROGRESS ON A
NEW ALBUM, JOHNSTON MOVED

EVERYTHING TO NASHVILLE,
WHERE McCOY AND OTHER A-TEAM

SESSION MUSICIANS SAT IN.

[BOB DYLAN'S
"I WANT YOU" PLAYING]

NARRATOR: "BLONDE ON BLONDE"
WAS BOTH A CRITICAL

AND COMMERCIAL SUCCESS.

IT WAS FOLLOWED BY "JOHN
WESLEY HARDING," ALSO RECORDED

ON MUSIC ROW.

DYLAN: "THE GUILTY
UNDERTAKER SIGHS"

"THE LONESOME
ORGAN GRINDER CRIES"

"THE SILVER SAXOPHONES SAY
I SHOULD REFUSE YOU"

"THE CRACKED BELLS
AND WASHED-OUT HORNS"

"BLEW INTO MY...

NARRATOR: THE NATION
WAS BECOMING MORE
POLITICALLY AND CULTURALLY

POLARIZED, AND MUSICAL TASTES
INCREASINGLY ACCENTUATED

THAT DIVIDE.

BUT IN THE RECORDING STUDIOS
OF NASHVILLE, AT LEAST,

THERE SEEMED TO BE
ROOM FOR EVERYONE.

McCOY: IT WAS ALMOST LIKE ALL OF
THESE FOLK ROCK ARTISTS SAID,

"NOW, WAIT A MINUTE.

WAIT. THERE'S SOMETHING
GOING ON THERE."

IT WAS LIKE THE
FLOODGATE OPENED.

HERE THEY CAME--
JOAN BAEZ; BUFFY ST. MARIE;

PETER, PAUL, AND MARY;
THE MANHATTAN TRANSFER;

LEONARD COHEN; GORDON
LIGHTFOOT; DAN FOGELBERG;

THE BYRDS.

IT'S JUST LIKE THE GATES

OPENED, AND HERE THEY CAME.

ROGER McGUINN: "CLOUDS
SO SWIFT, THE RAIN WON'T LIFT "

"GATE WON'T CLOSE,
RAILINGS FROZE "

"AND GET YOUR MIND OFF...

NARRATOR: THE BYRDS,

AN ECLECTIC ROCK BAND FROM
LOS ANGELES, HAD PIONEERED WHAT

CAME TO BE CALLED FOLK-ROCK
BY TURNING DYLAN'S SONG

"MR. TAMBOURINE MAN"

AND PETE SEEGER'S
"TURN, TURN, TURN"

INTO NATIONAL HITS.

THEN THEY HELPED POPULARIZE
PSYCHEDELIC-ROCK WITH A SONG

CALLED "EIGHT MILES HIGH."

IN 1968, LED BY FOUNDING
MEMBERS ROGER McGUINN

AND CHRIS HILLMAN, THEY SHOWED
UP ON MUSIC ROW WITH

THE INTENTION OF CREATING
AN ALBUM OF COUNTRY MUSIC.

WITH THEM CAME THEIR NEWEST
MEMBER, GRAM PARSONS, THE HEIR

TO A FLORIDA CITRUS EMPIRE,
WHO HAD ATTENDED

HARVARD UNIVERSITY.

THE BYRDS: "WHOO-EE,
RIDE ME HIGH..."

NARRATOR: ORIGINALLY
DRAWN TO FOLK MUSIC, AND
SURROUNDED BY PEOPLE

WHO CONSIDERED COUNTRY MUSIC
WITH CONTEMPT, PARSONS SWITCHED

ALLEGIANCES AFTER A FRIEND
PLAYED HIM SOME BUCK OWENS

AND MERLE HAGGARD RECORDS.

WHEN THE BYRDS GOT TO
NASHVILLE, LLOYD GREEN WAS

CALLED IN TO PROVIDE
A PEDAL STEEL GUITAR.

McGUINN: "YOU BUY ME
A FLUTE..."

GREEN: AND THE FIRST SONG WAS
"YOU AIN'T GOIN' NOWHERE,"

A BOB DYLAN SONG.

McGUINN: "TAILGATES
SUBSTITUTES..."

GREEN: SO, THEY'RE STANDING OVER
MY STEEL. I'M SITTING THERE,

AND I SAY, "WELL, WHERE DO
YOU GUYS WANT ME TO FILL?"

IN UNISON, THEY SAID,
"EVERYWHERE. EVERYWHERE."

THE BYRDS: "WHOO-EE..."

AND I SAID, "HEY,
MY KIND OF GUYS.

TURN IT ON."

SO, IF YOU LISTEN TO THE
"SWEETHEART OF THE RODEO" ALBUM

AND "YOU AIN'T GOIN' NOWHERE,"
YOU'LL HEAR STEEL GUITAR

FROM THE FIRST NOTE
TO THE END OF THE SONG,

THE LAST NOTE--THEY
LET ME PLAY EVERYWHERE.

"

NARRATOR: BUT WHEN THE BYRDS'
RECORD LABEL USED ITS

INFLUENCE TO GET THEM
AN INVITATION TO PERFORM

AT THE RYMAN AUDITORIUM--THE
FIRST ROCK BAND EVER TO PLAY

THE GRAND OLE OPRY--NO ONE
WAS PREPARED FOR THE REACTION.

McGUINN: " ...AND
A GUN THAT SHOOTS "

" ALL HIS KINGS
SUPPLIED WITH SLEEP "

" WE'LL CLIMB THAT HILL,
NO MATTER HOW STEEP "

" WHEN WE GET UP TO IT

THE BYRDS: " WHOO-EE...

GREEN: PEOPLE SAW THEM COMING
OUT AND STARTED BOOING.

THEY SAW THIS YOUNG GROUP
OF HIPPIE-LOOKING GUYS

AND WITH LONGER HAIR THAN
WHAT THEY WERE USED TO.

THEY LITERALLY BOOED.

WELCOME TO NASHVILLE.

THE BYRDS: " ...RIDE ME HIGH,
TOMORROW... "

[THE BYRDS' 'HICKORY WIND"
PLAYING]

"

NARRATOR: THE BYRDS' ALBUM,

"SWEETHEART OF THE RODEO,"
WAS NOT A COMMERCIAL SUCCESS.

PARSONS: " IN
SOUTH CAROLINA... "

NARRATOR:
COUNTRY STATIONS AVOIDED IT,
AND MANY ROCK STATIONS DID NOT

KNOW WHAT TO MAKE OF IT.

BUT SOME REVIEWERS SAW IN IT THE
BEGINNINGS OF SOMETHING NEW--

"COUNTRY ROCK."

PARSONS: "I ...REMEMBER
THE OAK TREE..."

ELVIS COSTELLO:
GRAM PARSONS--

I THINK HE HAD AN EVEN CLEARER
VISION OF THE CONNECTION

BETWEEN THE SOULFUL END
OF COUNTRY MUSIC
AND RHYTHM AND BLUES.

HE UNDERSTOOD WHERE THOSE
TWO THINGS COULD PERCOLATE.

THE BYRDS: "I ...HICKORY WIND

"

[KRIS KRISTOFFERSON'S
"CASEY'S LAST RIDE" PLAYING]

"

KRISTOFFERSON:
"CASEY JOINS THE HOLLOW SOUND
OF SILENT PEOPLE WALKING DOWN"

"THE STAIRWAY TO THE SUBWAY
IN THE SHADOWS DOWN BELOW"

"FOLLOWING THEIR FOOTSTEPS
THROUGH THE..."

BOBBY BRADDOCK:
I REMEMBER I USED TO DO DEMO
SESSIONS AT COLUMBIA STUDIO,

AND THIS GUY THERE
WHO WAS THE JANITOR...

KRISTOFFERSON: "I ...NEVER
SPEAKIN' TO A SOUL"

WOULD ALWAYS LAY ASIDE
HIS PUSH BROOM,

AND HE'D START ASKING ME
QUESTIONS ABOUT SONGWRITING.

AND, AS I GOT TO KNOW HIM,
I REALIZED THIS GUY WAS NOT

JUST A JANITOR.

I THINK HE WAS LIKE 3, 4 YEARS
OLDER THAN I WAS.

AND I FOUND OUT THAT HE HAD
BEEN TO OXFORD AND THAT HE HAD

BEEN AN OFFICER IN THE MILITARY
AND A HELICOPTER PILOT.

AND--HA HA!--I GOT TO
KNOW HIM PRETTY WELL.

I THOUGHT HE WAS AN AMAZING
SONGWRITER, AND HIS NAME WAS

KRIS KRISTOFFERSON.

[LOS PANCHOS'
"SOY RANCHERO" PLAYING]

NARRATOR: GROWING UP
IN BROWNSVILLE, TEXAS,

KRIS KRISTOFFERSON HAD SHOWN

AN EARLY INTEREST
IN POETRY AND MUSIC.

LOS PANCHOS: â€œ SOY RANCHERO,
SOY CERRERO â€œ

â€œ ...EL CAMPO...

NARRATOR: HE ESPECIALLY ENJOYED
LISTENING TO HANK WILLIAMS

ON THE RADIO AND TO THE
MEXICAN MUSIC THAT SEEMED TO

PERMEATE THE STREETS
OF HIS BORDER TOWN.

[LOS PANCHOS CONTINUE
SINGING IN SPANISH]

KRISTOFFERSON:
THE RANCHERAS AND THE MUSIC
I HEARD ACROSS THE RIVER

IN MATAMOROS...

[LOS PANCHOS
CONTINUE SINGING]

I THINK THAT PROBABLY--

PROBABLY PUT THE
HEART IN IT FOR ME.

[LOS PANCHOS CONTINUE SINGING]

NARRATOR: HIS MOTHER AND
HIS FATHER, A GENERAL
IN THE AIR FORCE,

HAD THEIR OWN IDEAS
FOR HIS FUTURE.

AND AFTER MOVING
TO CALIFORNIA,

WERE PROUD THAT THEIR SON
ENTERED PRESTIGIOUS

POMONA COLLEGE, WHERE HE
PLAYED RUGBY AND FOOTBALL,

JOINED THE RESERVE OFFICER
TRAINING CORPS, AND GRADUATED

PHI BETA KAPPA IN ENGLISH
LITERATURE, BEFORE GOING ON TO

OXFORD, ENGLAND, AS A RHODES
SCHOLAR TO CONTINUE STUDYING

THE ROMANTIC POETS.

KRISTOFFERSON:
I LOVED WILLIAM BLAKE

AND SHAKESPEARE,
OF COURSE.

WILLIAM BLAKE SAID, "IF HE
WHO IS ORGANIZED BY THE DIVINE

"FOR SPIRITUAL COMMUNION
REFUSE AND BURY HIS TALENT

"IN THE EARTH, EVEN THOUGH HE
SHOULD WANT NATURAL BREAD,

"SHAME AND CONFUSION OF FACE
WILL PURSUE HIM THROUGHOUT

LIFE TO ETERNITY."

HE'S TELLING YOU THAT YOU'LL
BE MISERABLE IF YOU DON'T DO

WHAT YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO DO.

NARRATOR: WHEN KRISTOFFERSON
TURNED 29, HIS LIFE WAS

AT A CROSSROADS.

HE HAD A WIFE AND SMALL CHILD
AND WAS WELL ON HIS WAY TOWARD

A DISTINGUISHED MILITARY
CAREER, LIKE HIS FATHER'S.

HE WAS A CAPTAIN AND
HELICOPTER PILOT IN THE ARMY'S

AIRBORNE RANGERS AND
HAD VOLUNTEERED FOR DUTY

IN VIETNAM, BUT INSTEAD WAS
ASSIGNED TO BE AN INSTRUCTOR

AT WEST POINT.

BEFORE HE STARTED THAT JOB,
HE VISITED NASHVILLE FOR A FEW

DAYS IN 1965.

MARIJOHN WILKIN, THE CO-WRITER
OF THE CLASSIC SONG

"LONG BLACK VEIL," AGREED
TO SHOW HIM AROUND.

SHE INTRODUCED HIM TO PRODUCER
COWBOY JACK CLEMENT,

WHO IN TURN TOOK HIM BEHIND THE
SCENES AT THE GRAND OLE OPRY.

KRISTOFFERSON: JACK AND MARIJOHN
TOOK ME BACKSTAGE THERE.

I WAS STILL IN UNIFORM.

CASH: "NOW, I TAUGHT
THE WEEPING WILLOW..."

KRISTOFFERSON:
JOHNNY CASH WAS THERE, AND
HE WAS SKINNY AS A SNAKE.

LOOKED LIKE HE WAS TRYING
TO BE LIKE HANK WILL--LIKE HE

WAS GONNA END UP
LIKE HANK WILLIAMS.

HE WAS STILL EXCITING
TO WATCH PERFORM.

DO IT!

AND THAT'S PROBABLY WHY
I LEFT THE ARMY.

IT JUST ELECTRIFIED ME.

CASH: "a ...DOWN
TO THE GULF "a

NARRATOR: HE RESIGNED HIS
WEST POINT POSITION, MOVED HIS

SMALL FAMILY TO NASHVILLE,
AND SET ABOUT TRYING TO

INTEREST PEOPLE IN THE SONGS
HE HAD BEGUN TO WRITE.

TO EARN MONEY, AND HOPING TO
MEET SOME ARTISTS WHO MIGHT

RECORD SOMETHING HE WROTE,
KRISTOFFERSON GOT A JOB

AT COLUMBIA RECORDS' STUDIO--
SWEEPING FLOORS, CLEANING

ASHTRAYS, AND SOMETIMES
SLIPPING DEMO TAPES AND

LYRIC SHEETS TO THE STARS
WHO PASSED THROUGH.

FOR 4 YEARS,
HE STRUGGLED TO MAKE IT.

HE AND HIS WIFE DIVORCED.

HIS PARENTS LOST PATIENCE

WITH THE DIRECTION
HIS LIFE HAD TAKEN.

KRISTOFFERSON: WELL, MY
MOTHER JUST DISOWNED ME.

SHE SENT ME A LETTER SAYING,
UH, "WE THOUGHT IT WAS CUTE

"WHEN YOU WERE LITTLE AND YOU
LIKED COUNTRY MUSIC, BUT THINK

"THAT AS A GROWN MAN, YOU KNOW,
NOBODY OVER THE AGE OF 15

LISTENS TO THAT TRASH,"
SHE SAID, "AND IF THEY DID,

IT WOULDN'T BE ANYBODY
WE WANT TO KNOW,"

AND, "PLEASE DON'T WRITE
OR COME HOME BECAUSE YOU'RE

AN EMBARRASSMENT TO US."

WHEN I READ THE LETTER,
I WAS IN JACK CLEMENT'S OFFICE.

AND JACK SAID, "YOU GOT
TO GIVE ME THAT LETTER"

'CAUSE," HE SAYS, "I WANT
TO SHOW IT TO JOHNNY CASH."

AND I GAVE HIM THE LETTER.

AND THE FIRST TIME I EVER MET
JOHN WAS WHEN I WAS A JANITOR

THERE ARE AT COLUMBIA
AND HE SAID TO ME,

"IT'S ALWAYS GREAT
TO GET A LETTER FROM
HOME, ISN'T IT, KRIS?"

HA HA!

KIND OF WAIT UNTIL
I'M INTO THE SONG,
YOU KNOW.

NARRATOR: FROM THEN ON,
CASH TOLD THE STUDIO TO LET

KRISTOFFERSON WATCH HIS
USUALLY CLOSED SESSIONS.

IN 1969, BOB BECKHAM OF
COMBINE MUSIC DECIDED TO TAKE

A CHANCE ON KRISTOFFERSON
AND BROUGHT HIM TO HIS BOSS,

THE RECORD PRODUCER AND
PUBLISHER FRED FOSTER,

TO AUDITION.

KRISTOFFERSON WAS HOPING
TO BE HIRED AS A SONGWRITER

WITH A WEEKLY SALARY,
CALLED A "DRAW."

KRISTOFFERSON: "THIS MAY BE
OUR LAST GOOD NIGHT TOGETHER"

FOSTER: NOW, MY FORMULA IS,
IF YOU'RE GONNA PLAY ME A SONG

THAT YOU'VE WRITTEN,
I WANT TO HEAR 4.

ANYBODY MIGHT LUCK UP
AND WRITE ONE.

A MIRACLE COULD HAPPEN
AND YOU MIGHT DO TWO.

YOU'RE NOT GONNA WRITE
4 GREAT SONGS UNLESS

YOU'RE A WRITER.

SO HE SANG ME 4 SONGS.

AND I THOUGHT, HONESTLY,
BEFORE HE FINISHED THOSE

4 SONGS, THAT I WAS
HALLUCINATING.

I SAID, "THERE'S NO WAY
ANYBODY CAN BE THIS GREAT.

MY, GOD, WHAT IS THIS?"

KRISTOFFERSON: "...OUR
SHADOWS COME TOGETHER"

"SOFTER THAN YOUR...

SO I SAID,
"OK, I'LL SIGN YOU.

I'LL AGREE TO THE DRAW YOU
WANT, BUT ON ONE CONDITION."

KRISTOFFERSON:
"...THESE MAY BE...

NARRATOR: FOSTER INSISTED
KRISTOFFERSON ALSO RECORD

AN ALBUM, SINGING
HIS OWN SONGS.

FOSTER: "MAN," HE SAID,
"YOU'RE CRAZY. I CAN'T SING.

I SOUND LIKE AN F-ing FROG."

I SAID, "POSSIBLY,

BUT ONE THAT CAN COMMUNICATE
'CAUSE YOU'VE SOLD ME."

HE SAID, "OK, IF YOU'RE CRAZY
ENOUGH, I GUESS I AM, TOO."

â€

NARRATOR: AS HE PREDICTED,
KRISTOFFERSON'S DEBUT ALBUM

DID NOT SELL WELL, BUT ONE
DAY, FOSTER CAME TO HIM

WITH AN IDEA FOR A NEW SONG.

IT WASN'T MUCH, JUST A PHRASE
THAT CAME TO FOSTER WHEN HE

MET THE SONGWRITER BOUDLEAUX
BRYANT'S NEW SECRETARY

NAMED BARBARA McKEE.

EVERYONE CALLED HER BOBBIE.

KRISTOFFERSON:
FRED SAID HE HAD
A SONG TITLE FOR ME.

I THOUGHT HE SAID, "McGEE."

BUT HE SAID, "BOBBIE McKEE."

"HOW DOES THAT GRAB YA?
ME AND BOBBIE McKEE?"

AND I SAYS, "HOW DOES
WHAT GRAB ME?" YOU KNOW.

I DIDN'T KNOW HOW I WAS
GONNA WRITE THAT.

AND THEN IT STARTED
COMING TOGETHER FOR ME.

â€ BUSTED FLAT IN BATON ROUGE

AND HEADIN' FOR THE TRAINS

FEELIN' NEARLY FADED
AS MY JEANS

BOBBY THUMBED A DIESEL DOWN
JUST BEFORE IT RAINED

TOOK US ALL THE WAY
TO NEW ORLEANS

AND HE GOT CAUGHT

IN A BAD RAINSTORM
IN BATON ROUGE.

KRISTOFFERSON: ...MY HARPOON
OUT OF MY ...

AND HE WROTE THE FIRST
VERSE IN HIS CAR--

"BUSTED FLAT IN BATON ROUGE,
HEADING FOR THE TRAIN,

FEELING NEARLY AS
FADED AS MY JEANS."

KRISTOFFERSON:
WITH THEM WINDSHIELD
WIPERS SLAPPIN' TIME

AND BOBBY...

I WAS TRYING TO CAPTURE A
FEELING THAT I HAD FROM A FILM

THAT HAD REALLY MOVED ME.

[PEOPLE SPEAKING ITALIAN]

KRISTOFFERSON:
FREEDOM'S JUST ANOTHER WORD
FOR NOTHING LEFT TO LOSE

NARRATOR: THE FILM WAS "LA
STRADA," BY THE ITALIAN MASTER

FEDERICO FELLINI, IN WHICH
THE HERO ABANDONS THE WOMAN HE

LOVES AFTER A LONG AND
TEMPESTUOUS JOURNEY.

KRISTOFFERSON:
...BOBBY SANG THE BLUES

AND, AT THE END OF THE
FILM, ANTHONY QUINN IS
GETTING DRUNK IN A BAR...

AND HE GOES OUT
BY THE BEACH.

â€œ ...AND BOBBY McGEE

AND HE'S LOOKING UP,
ON HIS KNEES,

LOOKING UP AT THE STARS
AND JUST WEeping, YOU KNOW?

AND THAT'S WHAT
I WAS TRYING TO GET.

â€œ ...ENOUGH FOR ME

â€œ GOOD ENOUGH FOR ME
AND BOBBY McGEE â€œ

SO I OWE IT TO FELLINI.
HA HA!

â€œ

NARRATOR: ROGER MILLER
WOULD BE THE FIRST
TO RECORD THE SONG.

OTHERS CAME OUT WITH
THEIR OWN VERSIONS.

THEN, IN 1970, THE BLUES
AND ROCK SINGER JANIS JOPLIN

RECORDED IT.

FRED FOSTER HAD A CHANCE
TO HEAR IT BEFORE IT

WAS RELEASED.

JOPLIN: â€œ FREEDOM'S JUST ANOTHER
WORD FOR NOTHIN' LEFT TO LOSE â€œ

â€œ NOTHIN', THAT'S ALL THAT
BOBBY LEFT ME, YEAH â€œ

â€œ BUT FEELIN' GOOD
WAS EASY, LORD â€œ

â€œ WHEN HE SANG THE BLUES

â€œ HEY, FEELIN' GOOD

WAS GOOD ENOUGH FOR ME â

â MM-HMM

â GOOD ENOUGH FOR ME
AND MY BOBBY McGEE â

â LA DA DA
LA DA DA DA... â

THEN SHE GOT TO THE MIDDLE
PART OF "BOBBY McGEE,"

AND I JUST LOST IT.
I JUST STARTED CRYING.

JOPLIN: â ...BOBBY McGEE, YEAH

I COULDN'T HELP IT.

JOPLIN: â LA DA DA
LA DA DA DA
LA DA DA DA DA DA DA DA DA â

â LA DA DA DA
DA DA DA DA â

â HEY, MY BOBBY,
MY BOBBY McGEE, YEAH â

THAT'S NOT A RECORD.
THAT'S AN EXPERIENCE.

JOPLIN: â LA DA DA
LA DA DA DA
LA DA DA DA DA DA DA DA DA â

AND I CALLED KRIS
AND TOLD HIM.

I SAID, "DON'T BE ALONE
WHEN YOU HEAR THIS."

â ...BOBBY McGEE, YEAH

â WELL, I CALL HIM MY LOVER,
CALL HIM MY MAN... â

NARRATOR: JOPLIN'S SINGLE,
RELEASED POSTHUMOUSLY--SHE HAD

DIED FROM A DRUG OVERDOSE--
BECAME THE NUMBER-ONE RECORD

IN THE COUNTRY.

JOPLIN: â LA LA LA LA...

NARRATOR:
OUT OF GRATITUDE FOR PROVIDING
HIM WITH THE TITLE OF HIS

FIRST BIG HIT, KRISTOFFERSON
INSISTED THAT FRED FOSTER

SHARE HALF OF THE
WRITING CREDIT.

JOPLIN: "HEY, HEY, HEY,
BOBBY McGEE, YEAH "

THE ENEMY IN VIETNAM

HAS SUDDENLY
ESCALATED THE FIGHTING

WITH A SHELLING OF 102
MAJOR TARGETS LAST NIGHT

AND 4 GROUND ASSAULTS ON
AMERICAN BASES TODAY.

AMERICAN LOSSES WERE PLACED
AT 12 KILLED AND 68 WOUNDED.

GOOD EVENING.

TODAY THE TWO AMERICANS WHO
LANDED AND WALKED ON THE MOON,

NEIL ARMSTRONG AND BUZZ ALDRIN,
IN THEIR "EAGLE" LUNAR MODULE

HAVE SUCCEEDED.

AND SO, IT'S ALL OVER,
EXCEPT FOR THE MASSIVE

CLEANUP JOB THAT REMAINS.

THE WOODSTOCK MUSIC AND ART
FAIR, HAVING DONE ITS THING,

QUIETLY FOLDS ITS TENT
AND STEALS AWAY.

HELLO. I'M JOHNNY CASH.

[CHEERING AND APPLAUSE]

[PLAYING "BIG RIVER"]

NARRATOR: BY THE SUMMER OF 1969,
JOHNNY CASH HAD REACHED

A LEVEL OF STARDOM
VIRTUALLY UNEQUALED BY ANY

PREVIOUS COUNTRY MUSIC ARTIST.

HIS LIVE PERFORMANCES NOW WERE
PLAYED BEFORE HUGE AUDIENCES--

20,000 PEOPLE AT NEW YORK'S
MADISON SQUARE GARDEN

AND AN APPEARANCE IN DETROIT
THAT GROSSED \$93,000, NEARLY

TWICE THE PREVIOUS RECORD
FOR A SINGLE COUNTRY CONCERT.

EVEN MORE IMPORTANT TO CASH,
JUNE HAD GIVEN BIRTH TO A SON,

JOHN CARTER CASH.

CASH: â€”a LA DA LA DA
LA DA LA, YEAH â€”a

["RING OF FIRE" PLAYING]

NARRATOR: NOW HE HAD HIS OWN
WEEKLY NETWORK TELEVISION SHOW

ON ABC,
WHICH CASH INSISTED BE TAPED

AT THE RYMAN AUDITORIUM.

ONLY A FEW YEARS EARLIER, HIGH
ON DRUGS, HE HAD KNOCKED OUT

ALL OF THE FOOTLIGHTS ON
THE STAGE, AND THE RYMAN HAD

TOLD HIM NEVER TO COME BACK.

â€”a ...COMIN' DOWN
THAT RAILROAD TRACK â€”a

NARRATOR:
HIS GUESTS RANGED ACROSS THE
NATION'S MUSICAL AND CULTURAL

DIVIDES--FROM COUNTRY LEGENDS
LIKE EDDY ARNOLD TO MOTOWN'S

STEVIE WONDER, FROM ROCK STAR
ERIC CLAPTON TO A LONG LIST OF

RISING FOLK ARTISTS CASH THOUGHT
MORE PEOPLE SHOULD HEAR--

INCLUDING JAMES TAYLOR,

ODETTA,

AND JONI MITCHELL.

WHEN NETWORK EXECUTIVES
BALKED AT HAVING PETE SEEGER

ON THE SHOW BECAUSE OF
HIS LEFTWING POLITICS,

CASH BROUGHT HIM ON, ANYWAY.

ROGER MILLER CAME ON
AND HAD SOME FUN

WITH ONE OF CASH'S
SIGNATURE SONGS.

â I KEEP MY PANTS UP
WITH A PIECE OF TWINE â

â I KEEP MY EYES
WIDE OPEN ALL THE TIME â

HA HA HA!

â I KEEP THE ENDS OUT
FOR THE TIE THAT BINDS â

â PLEASE SAY
YOU'RE MINE â

â AND PULL
THE TWINE â

[APPLAUSE]

NARRATOR: CASH INSTITUTED
A REGULAR SEGMENT ON HIS PROGRAM

IN WHICH HE EXPLORED WHAT
HE CONSIDERED FORGOTTEN SEGMENTS

OF SOCIETY, INCLUDING PRISONERS
AND NATIVE AMERICANS,

AND OVER THE OBJECTIONS
OF THE NETWORK,

HE INCLUDED A GOSPEL SONG
IN EVERY SHOW,

JUST AS HE HAD PROMISED
HIS MOTHER.

[APPLAUSE]

[TRUMPET PLAYING
"BLUE YODEL NO. 9"]

ONE NIGHT,
HE AND LOUIS ARMSTRONG

PLAYED "BLUE YODEL NO. 9."

IT WAS THE SAME TUNE
ARMSTRONG AND CASH'S IDOL

JIMMIE RODGERS HAD RECORDED
BACK IN 1930.

â€ THEN THE POLICE
CAME BY â€

â€ HE TOOK ME
RIGHT BY THE ARM â€

â€

YEAH.

[APPLAUSE]

â€ THE WARDEN
LED A PRISONER â€

â€ DOWN THE HALLWAY
TO HIS DOOM â€

â€ I STOOD UP
TO SAY GOOD-BYE â€

â€ LIKE ALL THE REST...

NARRATOR: JUST BEFORE
HIS APPEARANCE,

MERLE HAGGARD TOLD CASH
HE HAD BEEN ONE OF THE INMATES

AT THE FIRST
SAN QUENTIN CONCERT

BUT CONFESSED THAT HE HAD BEEN
KEEPING HIS PRISON RECORD

SECRET FROM HIS FANS
AND THE PRESS.

â DO MY REQUEST

â LET HIM SING ME BACK HOME

â WITH A SONG
I USED TO HEAR... â

HAGGARD: HE SAID,
"WHY DON'T YOU LET ME

TELL THE PEOPLE
WHERE YOU'VE BEEN?"

I SAID, "WHY WOULD YOU
WANT TO DO THAT, CASH?"

HE SAID, "YOU LET ME TELL
THE PEOPLE WHERE YOU'VE BEEN,"

HE SAID, "THEM GODDAMN,
DIRTY MAGAZINES

WILL NEVER BE ABLE
TO TOUCH IT."

HAGGARD AND JOHNNY CASH:
â TURN BACK THE YEARS

â SING ME BACK HOME...

I THOUGHT ABOUT IT.

I THOUGHT, "WELL, YOU KNOW,
THERE'S NOTHING LIKE HONESTY."

HE TOLD THE FOLKS THAT NIGHT
ON NETWORK TELEVISION.

HE SAID, "WHEN THIS GUY
AND I FIRST MET,

HE WAS IN THE AUDIENCE,"

AND HE TOLD THEM
WHERE HE WAS TALKING ABOUT,

AND, YOU KNOW,
I'VE NEVER BEEN SORRY.

â SING ME BACK HOME
BEFORE I DIE â

[APPLAUSE]

[BOB DYLAN AND JOHNNY CASH'S
"ONE TOO MANY MORNINGS" PLAYING]

NARRATOR: MEANWHILE,
BOB DYLAN HAD RETURNED TO TOWN

TO RECORD YET ANOTHER ALBUM,
"NASHVILLE SKYLINE,"

TO BE FILLED WITH SONGS

THAT HAD EVEN MORE
OF A COUNTRY FLAVOR.

â THE SIDEWALK
AND THE SIGN â

â AND I'M ONE
TOO MANY MORNINGS â

â AND A THOUSAND
MILES BEHIND â

â AND EVERYTHING
I'M SAYIN'... â

NARRATOR:
DYLAN INVITED JOHNNY CASH

TO STOP BY
THE RECORDING STUDIO,

AND THE TWO SPENT TIME
HAVING FUN

AND LAYING DOWN
SOME SONGS TOGETHER.

I KNOW IT.

â WE'RE JUST ONE
TOO MANY MORNINGS â

â AND A THOUSAND
MILES BEHIND â

ISN'T THAT RIGHT?

NARRATOR: CASH THEN
PERSUADED DYLAN TO MAKE

A RARE TELEVISION APPEARANCE
BY COMING ON HIS SHOW.

[APPLAUSE]

[PLAYING
"GIRL FROM THE NORTH COUNTRY"]

THAT THE RIGHT...

SOUNDS GREAT.

â IF YOU'RE TRAVELIN'

â IN THE NORTH
COUNTRY FAIR â

â WHERE THE WINDS
HIT HEAVY â

â ON THE BORDER LINE

â REMEMBER ME

â TO ONE
WHO LIVES THERE â

â FOR SHE ONCE WAS

â A TRUE LOVE OF MINE

â SEE FOR ME THAT HER
HAIR'S HANGIN' LONG â

â IT CURLS AND FALLS

â ALL DOWN HER BREAST

â SEE FOR ME
THAT HER HAIR'S... â

ROSANNE CASH: AND THEN BOB
WAS ON DAD'S TELEVISION SHOW.

THOSE TWO YOUNG MEN
SITTING SIDE BY SIDE

PLAYING "GIRL FROM
THE NORTH COUNTRY,"

DAD SAID LATER, HE SAID,

"I DIDN'T REALIZE
HOW IMPORTANT THAT WAS."

HE SAID, "ALL I DID WAS SIT
THERE AND STRUM SOME G CHORDS."

YEAH. FROM G CHORDS,
MIGHTY REVOLUTIONS COME

BECAUSE THOSE OF US OF
MY GENERATION WHO SAW THAT

UTTERLY CHANGED.

â IF YOU'RE TRAVELIN'
IN THE NORTH COUNTRY FAIR â

ROSANNE CASH: MY OWN HUSBAND
SAW THAT ON TV, AND HE SAID

IT OPENED THE DOOR
TO HIS LOVE OF COUNTRY MUSIC.

IT OPENED TO EVERYTHING.

IT OPENED TO MERLE HAGGARD,
OPENED TO THE LOUVIN BROTHERS.

â TO ONE WHO LIVES THERE

HE ALREADY KNEW DYLAN,
BUT THIS, YOU KNOW,

DYLAN AND DAD TOGETHER,
THAT WAS--

IT WAS AN EXPLOSION.

I REMEMBER GOING TO SCHOOL
THE NEXT DAY AND FEELING LIKE

I WAS THE COOLEST 13-YEAR-OLD
IN THE WORLD.

MY DAD AND BOB DYLAN HAD JUST
SANG TOGETHER THE NIGHT BEFORE

ON NATIONAL TELEVISION,
AND NOBODY COULD TOUCH ME.

DYLAN: â TRUE LOVE
OF MINE â

â TRUE LOVE
OF MINE â

â TRUE LOVE OF MINE

[APPLAUSE]

[KRIS KRISTOFFERSON'S
"HELP ME MAKE IT
THOUGH THE NIGHT" PLAYING]

â TAKE THE RIBBON
FROM YOUR HAIR â

â SHAKE IT LOOSE
AND LET IT FALL â

â LAYIN' SOFT

AGAINST MY SKIN... â

NELSON: KRIS KRISTOFFERSON
IS PROBABLY THE BEST SONGWRITER.

KRISTOFFERSON:
â ...SHADOWS ON THE WALL

YOU CAN JUST GO RIGHT DOWN
THE ROAD AND COMPARE KRIS

WITH ANYBODY--
GERSHWIN OR ANYBODY ELSE.

GATLIN: I THINK HE'S
THE GREATEST LYRICIST

IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE,
AND PEOPLE SAY,

"JOHNNY MERCER,"
AND JOHNNY MERCER WAS GREAT.

â MY HUCKLEBERRY FRIEND

JOHNNY MERCER, GREAT,
IS GREAT, BUT, LET ME TELL YOU,

"SEE HIM WASTED ON THE SIDEWALK
IN HIS JACKET AND HIS JEANS,

"WEARING YESTERDAY'S MISFORTUNE
LIKE A SMILE.

"ONCE HE HAD A FUTURE FULL
OF MONEY, LOVE, AND DREAMS,

"WHICH HE SPENT LIKE THEY
WERE GOING OUT OF STYLE,

"BUT HE KEEPS RIGHT ON
BELIEVING

"FOR THE BETTER OR THE WORSE,
SEARCHING--

"KEEPS RIGHT ON BELIEVING,
FOR THE BETTER OR THE WORSE,

"SEARCHING FOR THE SHRINE
HE'S NEVER FOUND.

"NEVER KNOWING IF BELIEVING
WAS A BLESSING OR A CURSE,

IF THE GOING UP
WAS WORTH THE COMING DOWN."

â HELP ME MAKE IT
THROUGH THE NIGHT â

NARRATOR: NASHVILLE WAS NOW
A SONGWRITING CAPITAL,

AND KRIS KRISTOFFERSON
WAS ONE OF THE CITY'S

HOTTEST SONGWRITERS,
HAVING ELEVATED

WHAT WAS POSSIBLE TO SAY
IN A COUNTRY SONG.

OTHER ARTISTS WERE EAGER
TO RECORD WHAT HE HAD WRITTEN,

THOUGH HE WAS STILL UNSURE
ABOUT HIS OWN SINGING VOICE.

SAMMI SMITH: â YESTERDAY
IS DEAD AND GONE â

â AND TOMORROW'S OUTSIDE...

NARRATOR: IN 1970,
SAMMI SMITH RELEASED

KRISTOFFERSON'S "HELP ME
MAKE IT THROUGH THE NIGHT."

IT WAS ONE OF SEVERAL
OF HIS SONGS

THAT DEALT DIRECTLY,
THOUGH POETICALLY,

WITH SEXUAL RELATIONS
BETWEEN A MAN AND A WOMAN,

MORE DIRECTLY THAN SOME PEOPLE

IN THE COUNTRY MUSIC INDUSTRY
WERE ACCUSTOMED TO.

SMITH: â ...DEVIL
TAKE TOMORROW â

â LORD, TONIGHT
I NEED A FRIEND â

SMITH: UNTIL KRIS, IT WAS LIKE,
"HOLD MY HAND, DARLING,"

OR, "MAY I KISS YOU

ON YOUR CHEEK?"

KRISTOFFERSON JUST WENT
RIGHT TO THE CORE OF IT.

"PUT YOUR WARM AND TENDER BODY
CLOSE TO MINE," HE SANG,

YOU KNOW, AND HE KNEW
WHAT HE WAS SINGING ABOUT,

AND AMERICA KNEW WHAT
HE WAS SINGING ABOUT.

NARRATOR: HE HAD MORE HITS
WITH SONGS

LIKE "FOR THE GOOD TIMES,"
ABOUT A MAN AND A WOMAN

MAKING LOVE ONE LAST TIME
AS THEY BREAK UP

AND "LOVING HER WAS EASIER

(THAN ANYTHING
I'LL EVER DO AGAIN),"

ABOUT THE SWEET MEMORY
OF A LOST LOVE.

KRISTOFFERSON: "I HAVE SEEN
THE MORNING BURNING GOLDEN

ON THE MOUNTAIN
IN THE SKIES

"

"ACHING WITH THE FEELING
OF THE FREEDOM

OF AN EAGLE WHEN SHE FLIES

"

PRIDE: I'M IN THE BUSINESS
OF SELLING LYRICS,

FEELINGS, AND EMOTIONS.

LYRICS, SEE, I SING LYRICS.

SEE, THAT'S WHAT'S WRONG
WITH A LOT OF OTHER MUSIC.

THEY GOT THE LYRICS,

BUT YOU DON'T NEVER HEAR THEM.

NOW WATCH THIS.

â€œ I HAVE SEEN THE MORNING
BURNING GOLDEN â€œ

â€œ ON THE MOUNTAIN IN THE SKY

â€œ ACHING WITH THE FEELING
OF THE FREEDOM â€œ

â€œ OF AN EAGLE WHEN SHE FLIES

â€œ TURNING ON THE WORLD
THE WAY SHE SMILED â€œ

â€œ UPON MY SOUL AS I LAY DYING

â€œ HEALING AS THE COLORS
IN THE SUNSHINE â€œ

â€œ AND THE SHADOWS OF HER EYE

â€œ WAKING IN THE MORNING
TO THE FEELING â€œ

â€œ OF HER FINGERS ON MY SKIN,
TALKING OF TOMORROW â€œ

NOW WATCH THIS LINE.

â€œ TALKING OF TOMORROW
AND THE MONEY â€œ

â€œ LOVE, AND TIME WE HAD TO--
COULD HAVE JUST SAID...

â€œ TALKING OF TOMORROW AND
THE MONEY WE HAD TO SPEND â€œ

â€œ TALKING OF TOMORROW
AND THE MONEY â€œ

â€œ LOVE, AND TIME
WE HAD TO SPEND â€œ

â€œ 'CAUSE LOVING HER
WAS EASIER â€œ

â€œ THAN ANYTHING
I'LL EVER DO AGAIN â€œ

AREN'T THOSE FINE LYRICS?
I DIDN'T WRITE THEM.

NARRATOR:

THE KRIS KRISTOFFERSON SONG

THAT CAUGHT
JOHNNY CASH'S ATTENTION

HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH LOVE.

INSTEAD, IT PAINTED
A DESPAIRING PICTURE

OF A LONELY MAN WAKING UP
ON A SUNDAY MORNING

HUNGOVER FROM SATURDAY NIGHT
AND HIS FEELINGS OF ISOLATION

AS HE WALKS THE STREETS OF
A PEACEFUL TOWN ON THE SABBATH.

KRISTOFFERSON: "WELL,
I WOKE UP SUNDAY MORNING "

" WITH NO WAY TO HOLD MY HEAD
THAT DIDN'T HURT "

"

" AND THE BEER I HAD
FOR BREAKFAST WASN'T BAD "

" SO I HAD
ONE MORE FOR DESSERT "

I WAS DESCRIBING WHAT I WAS
GOING THROUGH AT THE TIME.

" THEN I FUMBLLED THROUGH
MY CLOSET FOR MY CLOTHES "

" AND FOUND MY CLEANEST
DIRTY SHIRT "

" WELL, I WOKE UP
SUNDAY MORNING "

" WITH NO WAY TO HOLD MY HEAD
THAT DIDN'T HURT "

" AND THE BEER I HAD
FOR BREAKFAST WASN'T BAD "

" SO I HAD
ONE MORE FOR DESSERT "

AND THAT WAS TRUE, TOO.

" THEN I FUMBLLED THROUGH

MY CLOSET FOR MY CLOTHES â

â AND FOUND MY CLEANEST
DIRTY SHIRT â

AND I'M WEARING IT RIGHT NOW.

"AND I WASHED MY FACE
AND COMBED MY HAIR

AND STUMBLED DOWN THE STAIRS
TO MEET THE DAY."

â 'CAUSE THERE'S SOMETHING
IN A SUNDAY... â

IT WAS A--

â MAKES A BODY FEEL ALONE...

IT WAS A BLESSING.

â AND THERE'S NOTHING
SHORT OF DYIN' â

â HALF AS LONESOME
AS THE SOUND â

â ON THE SLEEPIN'
CITY SIDEWALKS â

â SUNDAY MORNING COMIN' DOWN

CROWELL: YOU STEP INTO THIS
EMOTIONALLY CHARGED SCENE

OF SORROW AND WOE

AND A STRANGE KIND OF
HOPEFULNESS AT THE SAME TIME.

GATLIN: YOU CAN SEE THAT OLD
BOY STUMBLING THROUGH THERE,

AND HE'S HUNGOVER, AND
HE'S SMOKED A BUNCH OF DOPE,

AND HE STAYED UP TOO LATE,
AND HE'S DEPRESSED,

OR HE'S LOST HIS JOB, OR
HIS WOMAN'S LEFT OR SOMETHING,

AND HE STUMBLES THROUGH THAT--

"AND FAR AWAY, I HEARD
A LONELY BELL A-RINGING..."

KRISTOFFERSON: "FAR AWAY,
A LONELY BELL WAS RINGIN'..."

"AND IT ECHOED
THROUGH THE CANYON

LIKE THE DISAPPEARING
DREAMS OF YESTERDAY"?

HEY, ALL THOSE WORDS IN THE
DICTIONARY, BUT NOBODY ELSE

BEFORE KRIS KNEW WHAT
DAMN ORDER THEY CAME IN.

KRISTOFFERSON: "ECHOED
THROUGH THE CANYONS"

"LIKE THE DISAPPEARING
DREAMS OF YESTERDAY..."

NARRATOR: WHEN
JOHNNY CASH HEARD

"SUNDAY MORNING COMING DOWN,"
HE SAID LATER,

HE FELT AS IF HE'D
WRITTEN IT HIMSELF.

KRISTOFFERSON: "WISHIN', LORD,
THAT I WAS STONED..."

NARRATOR: "THE LINES
OF THE SONG STARTED RUNNING

THROUGH MY HEAD,"
HE REMEMBERED,

"AND I REALIZED
I COULD IDENTIFY

WITH EVERY ONE OF THEM."

CASH DECIDED TO PERFORM
"SUNDAY MORNING COMING DOWN"

ON HIS TELEVISION SHOW.

ROSANNE CASH: THERE WAS A LINE,
"WISHIN', LORD,

THAT I WAS STONED"
IN "SUNDAY MORNING."

THE NETWORK DID NOT WANT DAD

TO SING, "WISHIN' I WAS STONED,"

ON NETWORK TELEVISION, AND
HE ARGUED WITH THEM ABOUT IT,

AND THEY PUT THE FOOT DOWN--
"YOU JUST CAN'T DO THAT."

WELL, KRIS WAS IN THE AUDIENCE
THAT NIGHT, AND DAD

JUST COULDN'T IN GOOD
CONSCIENCE CHANGE THAT WORD

WITH THE SONGWRITER
SITTING IN THE AUDIENCE.

â€” I'M WISHIN', LORD,
THAT I WAS STONED... â€”

WHEN HE WAS PERFORMING IT,
HE SANG,

"WISHING, LORD,
THAT I WAS STONED,"

LITTLE EMPHASIS ON "STONED."

KRIS WAS VERY HAPPY.
THE NETWORK WAS NOT.

KRISTOFFERSON: â€” AND THERE'S
NOTHIN' SHORT OF DYIN'... â€”

NARRATOR: LATER, CASH
WOULD ASK THE MAN

WHO HAD WRITTEN THOSE WORDS,
THE SHY EX-JANITOR WHO THOUGHT

HE DIDN'T HAVE A GOOD VOICE,
TO COME ON HIS SHOW.

KRISTOFFERSON:
JOHN WAS ALWAYS ENCOURAGING ME.

HE WAS ALWAYS ON MY SIDE, AND
HE PUT ME ON HIS SHOW, TOO.

IT WAS THE FIRST TIME
I WAS EVER

IN FRONT OF PEOPLE DOING THAT.

â€” DOO DOO DOO DOO
DOO DOO DOO... â€”

I NEVER HAD TO WORK
FOR A LIVING AFTER THAT.

â MM MM MM

â DOO DOO DOO DOO DOO...

â I AM A LINEMAN
FOR THE COUNTY â

â AND I DRIVE THE MAIN ROAD

â SEARCHIN' IN THE SUN
FOR ANOTHER OVERLOAD... â

NARRATOR: AT THE SAME TIME
THAT "THE JOHNNY CASH SHOW"

WAS BEING TAPED
AT THE RYMAN AUDITORIUM,

TWO OTHER COUNTRY MUSIC
PROGRAMS

WERE APPEARING
ON NETWORK TELEVISION.

â AND THE WICHITA LINEMAN

â IS STILL ON THE LINE...

NARRATOR: ONE ORIGINATED
IN LOS ANGELES,

HOSTED BY GUITARIST AND SINGER
GLEN CAMPBELL,

WHO HAD BEEN A SOUGHT-AFTER
SESSION MUSICIAN

BEFORE HE BROKE OUT ON HIS OWN
WITH POP HITS

LIKE "GENTLE ON MY MIND,"
"BY THE TIME I GET TO PHOENIX,"

AND "WICHITA LINEMAN."

ANNOUNCER:
WELCOME TO "HEE HAW."

I'M A-PICKIN'...

AND I'M A GRINNIN'

NARRATOR: THE OTHER SHOW
WAS BEING TAPED

AT CBS' NASHVILLE AFFILIATE.

ITS HOSTS WERE BUCK OWENS
FROM BAKERSFIELD, CALIFORNIA,

AND A MUSICAL VIRTUOSO
FROM VIRGINIA NAMED ROY CLARK,

BUT AS WORD ABOUT THE SHOW
SPREAD ACROSS NASHVILLE,

PEOPLE STARTED TO WORRY.

ANNOUNCER: AND TODAY
THEY'RE MAKING

THEIR ANNUAL TELEPHONE CALL.

WENDELL: THERE WAS
A LOT OF TALK ABOUT,

"OH, LORD, I HOPE NOT.
I HOPE IT'S NOT WHAT WE HEAR."

IS GRANDPA THERE?

YEP. I'M HERE.

THAT'S AN IMAGE
WE TRY TO LIVE DOWN,

AND THEY'RE GONNA PLAY IT UP.

CLARK: THEY TRIED TO PAINT
A PICTURE THAT EVERYBODY

IN COUNTRY MUSIC,
THEY WERE BAREFOOTED,

AND THEY WORE BIB OVERALLS,
AND THE MOST OF US RAISED UP

AND SAID, "LOOK. I HAVE
TWO CUSTOM-MADE TUXEDOS,

"BUT I'M NOT ASHAMED TO SAY
THAT I DID GROW UP

IN BIB OVERALLS,
AND PROBABLY YOU DID, TOO."

IT SHOULD HAVE
A LITTLE MORE CLASS,

BUT BEING THIRD CLASS
IS BETTER THAN BEING NO CLASS.

I SWEAR, I BEEN
READIN' SO MUCH

ABOUT THE EVILS
OF DRINKIN',

I'M A-GETTIN' READY
TO GIVE IT UP.

GIVE UP DRINKIN'?
NO, READIN'.

McCOY: WHAT MADE IT WORK WAS,
"OK. WE CAN LAUGH AT OURSELF,"

AND THAT'S WHAT WE WERE DOING--
WE WERE LAUGHING AT OURSELF--

BUT WHEN THEY DID THE MUSIC,
IT WAS SERIOUS.

WE HAD THIS CORNBALL OVER HERE,
BUT WITH IT,

WE HAD THIS LEGITIMATE LOOK
AT COUNTRY MUSIC.

[PLAYING "BACK UP AND PUSH"]

NARRATOR: "HEE HAW"
WAS AN IMMEDIATE HIT

WITH AUDIENCES
ACROSS THE NATION.

BESIDES ITS CORNPONE HUMOR,
IT PROVIDED

AN EXTRAORDINARY SHOWCASE
FOR COUNTRY MUSIC,

HELPING TO REVIVE
SOME OLD CAREERS,

PROVIDING EXPOSURE
FOR NEW ARTISTS,

AND MAKING MONEY
FOR EVERYBODY.

â^a

GIDDENS: MY GRANDMOTHER,
MY BLACK GRANDMOTHER,

WHO LIVED OUT IN THE COUNTRY,

SHE HAD BLUES AND JAZZ RECORDS,

YOU KNOW, IN A NICE CABINET,
AND I REMEMBER THAT

BECAUSE I LIVED WITH THEM
WHEN I WAS A KID,

BUT DON'T GET IN FRONT OF HER
"HEE HAW" EVERY SATURDAY NIGHT.

â

MATTEA: "HEE HAW"
WAS A RITUAL IN OUR HOUSE,

AND THAT WAS WHAT YOU DID
ON A SATURDAY.

EVEN IF YOU WERE
HAVING A COOKOUT,

THE TV GOT BROUGHT OUTSIDE,
THE LITTLE, TINY ONE.

IT PLUGGED IN, THE ANTENNA WENT
UP, AND YOU WATCHED "HEE HAW,"

AND IT WAS JUST--IT WAS GREAT.

THE MUSIC WAS GREAT.

IT WAS CORNY, BUT WE LOVED IT,
AND WHEN I MOVED TO NASHVILLE,

MY UNCLE--MY UNCLE PAPPY,
WHO LIVED ON THE FARM--

WOULD SAY, "NOW, I KEEP LOOKING
FOR YOU ON 'HEE HAW,' HONEY.

I KEEP LOOKING FOR YOU."

I'M LIKE, "UNCLE PAPPY, I'M A
TOUR GUIDE AT THE HALL OF FAME.

I'M NOT GOING TO BE
ON 'HEE HAW.'"

HE'S LIKE,
"I KEEP LOOKING FOR YOU,"

AND WHEN I FINALLY
GOT TO DO "HEE HAW"...

MY HOMETOWN--
CROSS LANES, WEST VIRGINIA.

AND I GOT TO SALUTE
MY HOMETOWN,

IT WAS AN ICONIC MOMENT
THAT RIPPLED THROUGH MY FAMILY,

AND HE WAS LIKE,
"SEE? I TOLD YOU."

â

NARRATOR: "HEE HAW" WOULD BE
BROADCAST FOR 25 YEARS--

3 YEARS WITH CBS AND THE REST
AS ONE OF THE MOST SUCCESSFUL

SYNDICATED SHOWS
IN TELEVISION HISTORY.

â

[APPLAUSE]

[JOHNNY WRIGHT'S
"HELLO, VIETNAM" PLAYING]

WRIGHT: â KISS ME GOOD-BYE
AND WRITE ME WHILE I'M GONE â

â GOOD-BYE, MY SWEETHEART,
HELLO, VIETNAM â

â AMERICA HAS HEARD
THE BUGLE CALL â

â AND YOU KNOW IT INVOLVES US
ONE AND ALL... â

MALONE: I THINK
HISTORICALLY, COUNTRY MUSIC

HAS BEEN APOLITICAL, BUT WHEN
THEY DID VENTURE INTO POLITICS,

I THINK THE BEST DESCRIPTION
WOULD BE POPULISM,

MUSIC THAT WAS SUSPICIOUS
OF BANKS AND CORPORATIONS

OR OF SO-CALLED EXPERTS,
INTELLECTUALS,

BUT THE REAL UPSURGE
OF A POLITICAL CONSERVATISM

CAME IN THE 1960s
NOT SO MUCH AS A DEFENSE

OF THE VIETNAM WAR, BUT AS
PROTEST AGAINST THE PROTESTORS.

WRIGHT: "KISS ME GOOD-BYE..."

NARRATOR: THE SOLDIERS
SERVING IN VIETNAM

DISPROPORTIONATELY CAME FROM
COUNTRY MUSIC'S CORE AUDIENCE--

WORKING-CLASS FAMILIES.

65% OF ALL RECORDS
SOLD AT MILITARY BASES

WERE COUNTRY MUSIC,
AND MOST OF THE SONGS

DEALT LESS WITH
THE POLITICS OF THE WAR

THAN WITH ITS HUMAN COST.

LORETTA LYNN'S "DEAR UNCLE SAM"
WAS TOLD BY A WIFE

SAYING THAT
SHE NEEDED HER HUSBAND

JUST AS MUCH AS THE NATION DID.

MEL TILLIS WROTE "RUBY,
DON'T TAKE YOUR LOVE TO TOWN"

FROM THE POINT OF VIEW
OF A DISABLED VETERAN

CONFINED TO HIS BED AT HOME
WHILE HIS YOUNG WIFE

PREPARES TO GO OUT
FOR THE NIGHT.

TWO OF COUNTRY SINGER JAN
HOWARD'S THREE SONS ENLISTED.

AFTER JIMMY, HER OLDEST,
ARRIVED IN VIETNAM,

SHE RECORDED "MY SON,"
WHICH RECOUNTED

SOME OF HER FONDEST MEMORIES
OF HIS CHILDHOOD

AND HER CONCERN FOR HIS SAFETY.

HOWARD: "IT SEEMS ONLY
YESTERDAY THAT THE MOST
IMPORTANT THING

"ON YOUR MIND WAS WHETHER
YOU'D MAKE THE BASEBALL TEAM

"OR GET THE NEW SCHOOL JACKET
LIKE ALL THE OTHER KIDS HAD

"AND I REMEMBER HOW
YOUR EYES LIGHTED UP

"WHEN YOU GOT
YOUR FIRST ROD AND REEL

"FOR THAT BIG FISHING TRIP,
JUST YOU AND YOUR DAD

NARRATOR: SHE SENT IT TO JIMMY
BUT NEVER HEARD BACK FROM HIM.

HE HAD LISTENED TO IT,
BUT BEFORE HE HAD A CHANCE

TO WRITE HIS MOTHER BACK,
HE WAS KILLED

WHEN HIS ARMORED PERSONNEL
CARRIER HIT A LAND MINE

SOUTH OF DANANG.

HOWARD'S MIDDLE SON
SURVIVED HIS TOUR OF DUTY,

BUT HER YOUNGEST, STILL
NOT OLD ENOUGH TO ENLIST,

WAS SO TRAUMATIZED
BY HIS BIG BROTHER'S DEATH,

HE HAD A MENTAL BREAKDOWN
AND COMMITTED SUICIDE.

HOWARD:
SO THE VIETNAM WAR TOOK TWO.

IT WAS A HORRIBLE WAR AND...

"IN THOSE DAYS, IT SEEMED

â THE HOUSE WAS ALWAYS FILLED
WITH LAUGHTER, JOY... â

HORRIBLE TIME, HORRIBLE TIME.

â THEY WERE SUCH GOOD BOYS...

MY DOORBELL RANG, AND IT WAS
THIS GUY STANDING THERE.

HE SAID, "MS. HOWARD,
WE'RE MARCHING IN MEMPHIS

IN PROTEST
OF THE VIETNAM WAR."

I SAID, "REALLY?"

HE SAID, "AND WE FIGURED,
IN VIEW OF WHAT HAPPENED..."

I SAID, "YEAH, MY SON'S DEATH."

HE SAID, "WELL, WE THOUGHT
YOU'D LIKE TO JOIN US."

I SAID, "ONE OF THE REASONS HE
DIED WAS SO YOU HAVE THE RIGHT.

"IN THIS COUNTRY,
YOU HAVE A RIGHT.

GO RIGHT AHEAD
AND DEMONSTRATE. HAVE AT IT."

I SAID, " NO.
I WON'T BE JOINING YOU,"

I SAID, "BUT
I'LL TELL YOU WHAT.

"IF YOU EVER RING MY DOORBELL
AGAIN, I WILL BLOW

YOUR DAMN HEAD OFF
WITH A .357 MAGNUM."

â

NARRATOR: ON NOVEMBER 15, 1969,

EARL SCRUGGS JOINED HUNDREDS
OF THOUSANDS OF PROTESTERS

CONVERGING ON WASHINGTON, D.C.,

TO CALL FOR AN END

TO THE VIETNAM WAR.

HE AND LESTER FLATT
HAD ALREADY BROKEN UP

OVER MUSICAL DISAGREEMENTS
THAT REFLECTED

SOME OF THE TENSIONS
WITHIN AMERICAN SOCIETY.

SCRUGGS, INFLUENCED BY
HIS SONS, ADDED BOB DYLAN SONGS

AND OTHER CONTEMPORARY MATERIAL
TO THEIR REPERTOIRE.

FLATT HAD INSISTED ON STICKING

WITH TRADITIONAL
BLUEGRASS MUSIC.

GARY SCRUGGS: MY FATHER
AND MY BROTHER, ME,

AND CHARLIE DANIELS CAME HERE
FROM NASHVILLE BECAUSE

WE THOUGHT THAT BY COMING HERE,
WE COULD REPRESENT OURSELVES

AND NASHVILLE
AND ALL PEACE-LOVING PEOPLE.

[PLAYING
"FOGGY MOUNTAIN BREAKDOWN"]

RANDY SCRUGGS: DAD,
MY BROTHER GARY, AND MYSELF

AND CHARLIE DANIELS PERFORMED
AT THE MALL IN WASHINGTON.

THERE WASN'T ANY OTHER ARTIST
FROM NASHVILLE.

DAD DID IT WITH
NO RESERVATIONS AT ALL.

HE FELT IT WAS
THE RIGHT THING TO DO.

IN WASHINGTON, THE PAPERS SAID

THERE WERE
OVER A MILLION PEOPLE.

IN NASHVILLE, THEY WROTE THAT
THERE WAS SOMEWHERE

OVER 200,000,
AND IT WAS LIKE COMING BACK

AND READING THAT,
YOU'RE GOING LIKE, "WOW.

"YOU KNOW, PEOPLE
DON'T UNDERSTAND

EXACTLY WHAT'S GOING ON."

â€

NARRATOR: AT THE SAME TIME
AS THE MARCH ON WASHINGTON,

A SONG BY MERLE HAGGARD BECAME
THE NUMBER-ONE COUNTRY SONG

IN AMERICA AND CROSSED OVER
TO THE POP CHARTS.

HAGGARD: â€ WE DON'T SMOKE
MARIJUANA IN MUSKOGEE â€

â€ WE DON'T TAKE OUR TRIPS
ON LSD â€

â€ WE DON'T BURN OUR DRAFT CARDS
DOWN ON MAIN STREET â€

â€ 'CAUSE WE LIKE LIVIN' RIGHT
AND BEING FREE â€

MALONE: IT'S HARD TO KNOW
EXACTLY WHAT TO SAY

ABOUT "OKIE FROM MUSKOGEE."

HE AND HIS BOYS WERE JUST
DRIVING THROUGH THE COUNTRY

WHEN THEY DROVE
THROUGH OKLAHOMA,

WHICH WAS THE BIRTHPLACE
OF HIS PARENTS.

THEY SAW THE CITY SIGN
FOR MUSKOGEE.

SOMEBODY ON THE BUS SAID,

"BOY, I BET THEY DON'T

SMOKE MARIJUANA IN MUSKOGEE,"

AND THEY STARTED
WRITING A SONG ABOUT IT

JUST AS SORT OF A JOKE.

BENSON:
WE LOVED MERLE HAGGARD

'CAUSE WHAT A GREAT SONGWRITER,
GREAT SINGER.

ALL OF A SUDDEN HE COMES OUT
WITH "OKIE FROM MUSKOGEE,"

1969, AND WE'RE GOING,
"WAIT A MINUTE. WAIT. WHAT?"

YOU KNOW, OH, MAN, HERE IT IS--
REDNECKS, HIPPIES;

ANTI-VIETNAM, PRO-VIETNAM;

"AMERICA: LOVE IT OR LEAVE IT,"

OR "AMERICA, WE THINK
YOU NEED TO CHANGE"--

AND HERE WAS MERLE HAGGARD,
WHO WE LOVED,

AND, "HOW COULD YOU
DO THIS TO US?"

NOT ONLY THAT, "WE DON'T SMOKE
MARIJUANA IN MUSKOGEE."

EVERYBODY IN COUNTRY MUSIC KNEW
THAT MERLE SMOKED MARIJUANA,

BUT THE AUDIENCE DIDN'T.

MALONE: THEY SORT OF CONVERTED
THE SONG INTO A TRIBUTE

TO SMALL-TOWN AMERICAN LIFE
AND TO THOSE PEOPLE

WHO PAID THEIR TAXES
AND DEFENDED THEIR GOVERNMENT

AND FOUGHT IN THE WARS
AND THAT SORT OF THING,

AND TO MERLE'S GREAT SURPRISE,
THE SONG WAS A HUGE HIT.

HAGGARD: "BOOTS ARE STILL
IN STYLE FOR MANLY FOOTWEAR"

"BEADS AND ROMAN SANDALS
WON'T BE SEEN"

"AND FOOTBALL'S STILL
THE ROUGHEST THING ON CAMPUS"

"AND THE KIDS HERE STILL
RESPECT THE COLLEGE DEAN"

AND I DON'T THINK
WE REALIZED THE IMPACT

OF THE MANY DIFFERENT MESSAGES
THAT IT HAD.

THE MAIN MESSAGE, I THINK, IS,
"I'M PROUD TO BE SOMETHING"--

"I'M PROUD TO BE BLACK."
"I'M PROUD TO BE WHITE."

I'M PROUD
TO BE AN OKIE"--

AND THERE'S A LOT OF PEOPLE
THAT IDENTIFY WITH THAT.

NARRATOR: "OKIE FROM MUSKOGEE"
WOULD BE HAGGARD'S BIGGEST HIT,

THE RALLYING CRY
OF THE SO-CALLED

SILENT MAJORITY WHO SUPPORTED
THE WAR IN VIETNAM.

WHETHER HE INTENDED TO OR NOT,

MERLE HAGGARD NOW FOUND HIMSELF
IN THE MIDDLE OF THE STORM

THAT WAS TEARING
HIS COUNTRY APART.

[JOHNNY CASH'S "MAN IN BLACK"
PLAYING]

JOHNNY CASH: "WELL, YOU WONDER
WHY I ALWAYS DRESS IN BLACK"

"WHY YOU NEVER SEE
BRIGHT COLORS ON MY BACK"

AND WHY DOES MY APPEARANCE
SEEM TO HAVE A SOMBER TONE?

WELL, THERE'S A REASON
FOR THE THINGS THAT I HAVE ON

I WEAR THE BLACK FOR THE
POOR AND THE BEATEN DOWN

LIVIN' IN THE HOPELESS...

IT'S VERY EASY
TO STAND ON THE MARGINS

AND, YOU KNOW,
SORT OF THROW CABBAGES,

BUT NOT SO EASY
TO STAND IN THE MIDDLE

AND UNITE THE WAY HE DID.

I WEAR THE BLACK
FOR THOSE WHO'VE NEVER READ...

NARRATOR: AS THE 1970s BEGAN,
JOHNNY CASH'S RECORDS

PLAYED CONSTANTLY
ON COUNTRY RADIO,

BUT HE WAS ALSO A HERO TO MANY
MEMBERS OF THE COUNTERCULTURE.

HE WOULD SOMETIMES FLASH
A PEACE SIGN DURING A CONCERT

BUT REFUSED
TO PUBLICLY CRITICIZE

PRESIDENT RICHARD NIXON.

HE AND JUNE
ALSO TRIED TO HELP JAN HOWARD

AFTER SHE LOST HER SONS

BY BRINGING HOWARD
WITH THEM ON TOUR.

HE WENT TO PLAY FOR THE TROOPS
IN VIETNAM WHILE BEING VOCAL

ABOUT HIS OPPOSITION
TO THE WAR IN VIETNAM.

THAT WAS HIM IN A NUTSHELL.

JOHNNY CASH: "EACH WEEK,
WE LOSE 100 FINE, YOUNG MEN..."

ROSANNE CASH: HE COULD HOLD
TWO OPPOSING THOUGHTS

AT THE SAME TIME
AND BELIEVE IN BOTH OF THEM

WITH THE SAME DEGREE
OF PASSION AND POWER.

"

NARRATOR: PRESIDENT NIXON
INVITED HIM TO PERFORM

AT THE WHITE HOUSE, AND THOUGH
MANY OF HIS YOUNGER FANS

OBJECTED, CASH SAID
HE WAS HONORED TO GO.

THEN HE LEARNED THAT
THE PRESIDENT WANTED HIM

TO SING GUY DRAKE'S SONG,
"WELFARE CADILLAC,"

WHICH WAS POPULAR
ON COUNTRY RADIO AT THE TIME

BUT DISPARAGED POOR PEOPLE
WHO RELIED

ON PUBLIC ASSISTANCE
TO SURVIVE.

"

ROSANNE CASH: HE WENT TO THE
NIXON WHITE HOUSE TO PERFORM

YET REFUSED TO PERFORM
"WELFARE CADILLAC,"

EVEN THOUGH THE PRESIDENT
HAD REQUESTED IT.

JOHNNY CASH: "THE OLD MAN
TURNED OFF THE RADIO"

" SAID, "IT LOOKS TO ME LIKE
THEY'VE ALL GONE WILD"..."

ROSANNE CASH: INSTEAD,

HE SANG ONE OF HIS OWN SONGS.

JOHNNY CASH: "WELL, MAN, COULD
IT BE THAT THE GIRLS AND BOYS

ARE TRYIN' TO BE HEARD
ABOVE YOUR NOISE?"

AND THE LONELY VOICE OF YOUTH
CRIES, "WHAT IS TRUTH?"

NARRATOR: THE SONG WAS
"WHAT IS TRUTH,"

A FULL-THROATED
DEFENSE OF THOSE

WHO CHALLENGED THE STATUS QUO,
FROM THE MUSIC THEY DANCED TO

AND THE LENGTH OF THEIR HAIR
TO QUESTIONS ABOUT WAR

AND THE NEED TO SPEAK OUT
AGAINST INJUSTICE.

JOHNNY CASH: "YOU BETTER HELP
THAT VOICE OF YOUTH

FIND WHAT IS TRUTH

AND THE LONELY VOICE
OF YOUTH CRIES

"WHAT IS TRUTH?"

NELSON: "WHEN THE EVENING SUN
GOES DOWN

YOU WILL FIND ME

HANGIN' ROUND

THE NIGHTLIFE
AIN'T NO GOOD LIFE

BUT IT'S MY LIFE...

NARRATOR: WILLIE NELSON
AND NASHVILLE

NEVER REALLY HIT IT OFF.

MUSIC CITY DIDN'T KNOW
QUITE WHAT TO DO WITH HIM.

NELSON: "DREAMING..."

NARRATOR: HIS MUSIC WAS
IMPOSSIBLE TO PIGEONHOLE,

INFLUENCED AS MUCH BY JAZZ
GUITARIST DJANGO REINHARDT

AS IT WAS BY HIS OTHER HERO
ERNEST TUBB,

AND HIS VOCAL PHRASING
WAS UNLIKE ANYBODY ELSE'S.

âa WELL, LISTEN TO THE BLUES
THEY'RE PLAYIN'... âa

THIS DIDN'T SOUND
ANYTHING LIKE NASHVILLE,

AND WILLIE DIDN'T WANT IT TO.

McDILL: IF YOU LISTEN
TO HIM SING, IT'S SORT OF--

HE SORT OF HAS A JAZZ APPROACH
TO HIS SINGING AND HIS PLAYING.

HE'S OBVIOUSLY INFLUENCED
BY A LOT MORE PEOPLE THAN WHAT

HE MIGHT HAVE HEARD ON "THE
GRAND OLE OPRY" GROWING UP.

âa LIFE IS JUST
ANOTHER SCENE... âa

JOHNNY GIMBLE
HAD ONCE SAID THERE WAS

ONLY TWO SONGS EVER WRITTEN--

"THE STAR-SPANGLED BANNER"
AND THE BLUES.

BANDS THAT I LIKED A LOT,

COUNTRY MUSIC PLAYERS
PLAY JAZZ--

BOB WILLIS
AND THE TEXAS PLAYBOYS,

A WHOLE LOT
OF JAZZ MUSICIANS THERE--

SO A LOT OF THE GREAT
COUNTRY MUSIC PLAYERS

COULD ALSO PLAY GREAT JAZZ.

â I'M CRAZY...

FOSTER: PEOPLE HADN'T
CAUGHT UP WITH HIM.

â CRAZY FOR FEELIN'
SO LONELY... â

FOSTER: I SAID, "WILLIE,

"THEY'RE GONNA
CATCH UP SOMEDAY."

â I'M CRAZY...

"SOONER OR LATER,
THEY'RE GONNA--THEY'LL DIG YOU.

"THEY'LL KNOW
WHAT YOU'RE DOING.

RIGHT NOW, THEY DON'T
KNOW WHAT YOU'RE DOING."

OH, I DIDN'T THINK IT
WAS THAT BAD.

I WAS HAVING FUN
BEING REJECTED. HA HA HA!

YOU KNOW, THEY LIKED MY SONGS,
BUT THEY DIDN'T CARE

FOR MY SINGING AND PHRASING,
A LITTLE CRAZY, SO TO SPEAK.

â I'M CRAZY FOR...

NARRATOR: SOME OF THE DOZENS
OF SONGS HE HAD WRITTEN,

LIKE "CRAZY," WERE ENORMOUS
HITS FOR OTHER PEOPLE,

INCLUDING PATSY CLINE,
BUT HIS OWN CAREER

AS A SINGER SEEMED
HOPELESSLY STUCK.

AT HIS DEBUT AS A MEMBER
OF THE GRAND OLE OPRY,

THE ANNOUNCER INTRODUCED HIM

AS WOODY NELSON,

AND HE QUIT AFTER A YEAR.

NELSON: "WELL, HELLO THERE

"MY, IT'S BEEN
A LONG, LONG TIME..."

NARRATOR: CHET ATKINS,
HIS PRODUCER AT RCA,

STRUGGLED TO COME UP WITH
ALBUM IDEAS THAT WOULD SELL.

NOTHING SEEMED TO WORK.

HE HAD RECORDED 14 ALBUMS.
NONE HAD SOLD WELL.

NELSON: "IT'S BEEN
SO LONG NOW "

"AND IT SEEMS NOW

"THAT IT WAS ONLY YESTERDAY

I WAS PROBABLY STUBBORN,
YOU KNOW--HA HA HA!--

AND NOT REALLY WANTING
TO DO ANYTHING

ANYBODY WANTED ME TO DO,
BUT THEY WEREN'T ALL WRONG.

HA HA HA!

"HOW'S YOUR NEW LOVE?

NARRATOR: LATE ONE NIGHT
AT TOOTSIE'S ORCHID LOUNGE,

HE WALKED OUT ONTO BROADWAY

AND LAID DOWN
IN THE MIDDLE OF THE STREET.

NELSON: "I HEARD
YOU TOLD HIM..."

WHEN I LAY DOWN IN THE ROAD
AND TRIED TO GET RUN OVER,

WELL, I DON'T KNOW WHAT
HAPPENED UP UNTIL THEN.

I JUST WOKE UP
A-LAYIN' ON THE HIGHWAY.

HA HA HA!

WELL, I HAD A LITTLE BIT
TO DRINK, AND I DECIDED,

YOU KNOW, I'D GO OUT
AND LAY DOWN ON THE HIGHWAY.

IT WAS RIGHT THERE ON BROADWAY
IN NASHVILLE.

I'M SURPRISED I'M STILL HERE.

â IT'S BEEN ROUGH
AND ROCKY TRAVELIN'... â

NARRATOR: WITH HIS SONGWRITING
ROYALTIES, NELSON MANAGED

TO BUY A FARM OUTSIDE OF
NASHVILLE AND TRIED FOR A WHILE

TO CONCENTRATE SOLELY
ON HIS WRITING,

BUT HIS TRUE LOVE
WAS PERFORMING HIS MUSIC

IN FRONT OF PEOPLE,
SO HE AND HIS BAND

WERE SOON BACK OUT ON THE ROAD.

ONE TOUR TOOK THEM
15,000 MILES IN JUST 18 DAYS.

ON ANOTHER, THEY DROVE
FROM A CONCERT IN CONNECTICUT

TO THEIR NEXT ONE
IN CALIFORNIA.

HIS FAVORITE PERFORMANCES
WERE ALWAYS IN HIS NATIVE TEXAS.

"WE WERE STARS IN TEXAS,"
HE SAID.

"IN NASHVILLE, I WAS LOOKED
UPON AS A LOSER SINGER."

NELSON: â GUESS NASHVILLE
WAS THE ROUGHEST... â

I'D GO BACK TO TEXAS AND
PLAY ALL THOSE BEER JOINTS

THAT I GREW UP IN AND WOULDN'T
HAVE TO CHANGE A THING,

AND THEY ALL LIKED WHAT I DID.

I KNEW THAT WHAT I WAS DOING,
I COULD DO IT FOREVER

WHETHER I, YOU KNOW, PLEASED
EVERYBODY IN THAT NASHVILLE

OR NOT, AND SO I KEPT
DOING WHAT I WANTED TO DO.

NARRATOR: WHEN
HIS FARMHOUSE BURNED DOWN

AND ALL HE WAS ABLE TO SAVE
WAS HIS FAVORITE GUITAR TRIGGER

AND A GUITAR CASE FILLED
WITH HIS MARIJUANA,

WILLIE NELSON DECIDED
HE HAD HAD ENOUGH.

HE MOVED BACK HOME TO TEXAS
AND STARTED OVER.

NELSON: "I'M FINALLY
STANDIN' UPRIGHT..."

HALL: I KNEW WILLIE
IN NASHVILLE WHEN HE HAD,

YOU KNOW, A LITTLE, BLACK SUIT
AND A BLACK TIE,

THE B-FLAT BOOTS,
WE CALLED 'EM.

YOU KNOW, EVERYBODY WAS DOING
WHATEVER WE WERE TOLD TO DO,

I GUESS, AND WILLIE WENT BACK
TO TEXAS AND SAID,

"TO HELL WITH IT. I'M JUST
GOING TO BE WILLIE NELSON,"

TAUGHT EVERYBODY
A LESSON, YOU KNOW?

NELSON: "SAME ABOUT THEM ALL

â€” WE RECEIVED OUR EDUCATION

â€” IN THE CITIES OF THE NATION,
ME AND PAUL â€”

â€”

[JACQUELINE SCHWAB'S "HOW CAN
I KEEP FROM SINGING" PLAYING]

NARRATOR: EARLY ONE SUNDAY
MORNING AFTER DRIVING BACK

FROM A CONCERT
WITH CONNIE SMITH,

KRIS KRISTOFFERSON ENDED UP
AT THE EVANGEL TEMPLE

JUST OUTSIDE OF NASHVILLE.

GATLIN: THEY'D BEEN OUT THE
NIGHT BEFORE DOING A CONCERT,

AND KRIS WAS NOT
IN GREAT SHAPE THAT MORNING.

ACTUALLY, WE TALKED ALL NIGHT
BECAUSE MY GOAL

WAS TO GET HIM
TO GO TO CHURCH WITH ME.

HE HADN'T BEEN IN CHURCH
IN 20 YEARS,

AND I WANTED HIM
TO GO TO CHURCH WITH ME.

NARRATOR: THE EVANGEL TEMPLE--
WHICH COUNTED JOHNNY CASH,

JUNE CARTER, LARRY GATLIN,
AND CONNIE SMITH

AMONG ITS MEMBERS--
WAS PRESIDED OVER

BY THE REVEREND
JIMMIE RODGERS SNOW,

SON OF COUNTRY STAR HANK SNOW.

KRISTOFFERSON
HAD NOT BEEN RAISED

IN THE EVANGELICAL TRADITION
AND FELT A LITTLE

OUT OF HIS ELEMENT, BUT THEN
REVEREND SNOW BEGAN TO PREACH.

[KRIS KRISTOFFERSON'S
"WHY ME?" PLAYING]

KRISTOFFERSON: I CAN'T REMEMBER
HOW HE PHRASED IT,

BUT SOMETHING LIKE, IF YOU FELT
LIKE YOU NEEDED TO BE SAVED

TO COME DOWN
TO THE FRONT OF THE CHURCH.

I REMEMBER THINKING,
"THAT'LL BE THE DAY"...

KRISTOFFERSON:
"WHAT HAVE I EVER DONE

"TO DESERVE EVEN ONE

"OF THE PLEASURES..."

AND THE NEXT THING I KNEW,
I FOUND MYSELF GETTING UP

AND WALKING DOWN WITH
A FEW OTHER PEOPLE TO,

IT TURNED OUT, KNEEL DOWN,

AND HE ASKED ME
WHEN I WAS THERE, HE SAID,

"ARE YOU READY
TO ACCEPT THIS?"

"MAYBE, LORD..."

I WAS WEeping.

IT WAS AN EXPERIENCE
UNLIKE ANYTHING

I'D GONE THROUGH BEFORE,
AND THEN THE WORDS

TO THE SONG CAME TO ME
SHORTLY AFTER.

IT WAS STRAIGHT FROM THE HEART.

â LORD, HELP ME, JESUS

â I'VE WASTED IT,
SO HELP ME, JESUS... â

NARRATOR: THAT NIGHT,
KRISTOFFERSON SAT DOWN

AND WROTE "WHY ME?"

HIS RECORDING OF IT, WITH
LARRY GATLIN SINGING HARMONY,

WOULD BECOME HIS BIGGEST HIT
AS A SOLO ARTIST.

â SO HELP ME, JESUS

â MY SOUL'S IN YOUR HAND

â LORD, HELP ME, JESUS

â I'VE WASTED IT,
SO HELP ME, JESUS... â

IT'S STILL KIND OF
A MYSTERY TO ME,

BUT IT...

â

I CLOSE THE SHOW WITH IT NOW.

I SING IT EVERY NIGHT
I SING, SO--

â YOUR HAND...

[HELICOPTER]

NARRATOR:
IN THE SUMMER OF 1971,

AMERICAN COMBAT TROOPS WERE
BEING WITHDRAWN FROM VIETNAM,

BUT THE DIVIDES AT HOME
WERE AS GREAT AS EVER.

[NITTY GRITTY DIRT BAND'S
"NASHVILLE BLUES" PLAYING]

THAT SAME SUMMER, A GROUP
OF LONG-HAIRED MUSICIANS

FROM SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

BEGAN SETTING UP

IN THE WOODLAND STUDIOS
IN EAST NASHVILLE

ACROSS THE CUMBERLAND RIVER
FROM MUSIC ROW.

IT WAS
THE NITTY GRITTY DIRT BAND.

â€”^a

THEIR VERSION
OF JERRY JEFF WALKER'S SONG

"MR. BOJANGLES,"
HAD BEEN A TOP 10 POP HIT,

BUT THEY WERE STILL SEARCHING
FOR THEIR OWN SOUND.

McEUEEN: WE WERE NOT
A COUNTRY BAND.

I WAS THE BANJO PLAYER.

WE PLAYED A BLUEGRASS-SOUNDING
KIND OF MUSIC,

BUT IT WASN'T BLUEGRASS.

WE PLAYED JUG BAND MUSIC.
WE PLAYED SOME FOLK-ROCK MUSIC.

â€”^a

NARRATOR: THEY DECIDED
TO CUT A RECORD

WITH JOHN McEUEEN'S
BANJO-PLAYING HERO

EARL SCRUGGS.

WITH HIS HELP, THEY STARTED
RECRUITING OTHER LEGENDS

IN COUNTRY AND BLUEGRASS MUSIC
TO JOIN THEM--

MERLE TRAVIS, DOC WATSON,

JIMMY MARTIN,
AND VASSAR CLEMENTS.

MAYBELLE CARTER:

â THERE'S A BRIGHT

â AND A SUNNY SIDE, TOO...

NARRATOR: MAYBELLE CARTER
AGREED TO TAKE PART, AS WELL.

SHE HAD RECENTLY BEEN TOURING
WITH SOME OF HER GRANDCHILDREN

AND HAD NO PREJUDICES AGAINST
YOUNG PEOPLE'S MUSICAL TASTES.

MAYBELLE CARTER:
â KEEP ON THE SUNNY SIDE...

CARLENE CARTER: SHE SAYS ONE
DAY WHEN WE WERE PRACTICING,

GRANDMA SAYS,
"I REALLY LIKE THAT SONG

"ONE TOKE OVER THE LINE,
SWEET JESUS."

I THINK WE SHOULD LEARN IT,"
SO ME AND MY COUSIN DAVID

AND LAURIE
ARE CRACKING UP LAUGHING.

SHE SAID, "WELL, I THINK IT'S
A GOOD, LITTLE GOSPEL SONG."

HA HA HA!

WE SAID, "GRANDMA, DO YOU KNOW
WHAT THAT SONG'S ABOUT?"

SHE'S GOING,
"IT'S A GOSPEL SONG."

NARRATOR: BUT THE KING
OF COUNTRY MUSIC,

ROY ACUFF,
PROVED HARDER TO GET.

HE TOLD A REPORTER DOING
AN ARTICLE ABOUT THE NEWCOMERS,

"I DON'T KNOW IF THEY'RE
YOUNG BOYS OR OLD MEN.

"IF I EVER SAW THEM AGAIN
WITHOUT THEIR HAIR,

I'D NEVER KNOW THEM."

THAT DIDN'T SOUND TOO POSITIVE.

[NITTY GRITTY DIRT BAND'S
"SOLDIER'S JOY" PLAYING]

NARRATOR: ONCE THE SESSIONS
BEGAN, IT BECAME CLEAR

THAT THE WEST COAST HIPPIES
WEREN'T INTERESTED IN HAVING

THE COUNTRY AND BLUEGRASS
ARTISTS ACCOMPANY THEM.

THE NITTY GRITTY DIRT BAND
WANTED TO BACK UP THE LEGENDS.

â

HANNA: WE SET UP
IN A BIG STUDIO

IN A CIRCLE, REALLY,
FACING EACH OTHER.

IT WAS SO WARM
AND SO IMMEDIATE.

I THINK THE IDEA WAS TO TRY

TO RE-CREATE A LIVING ROOM
OR A BACK PORCH.

â

McEUEEN: FOR US, IT WAS LIKE
GOING BACK TO 1928

AND MAKING EARLY RECORDS.

WE WANTED TO MAKE
AN OLD RECORD.

â

NARRATOR: THEY KEPT AT IT
FOR 6 DAYS,

PERFORMING ONE SONG
AFTER ANOTHER--

HALF A DOZEN CARTER FAMILY
STANDARDS,

LIKE "KEEP ON THE SUNNY SIDE"

AND "WILDWOOD FLOWER;"

A FEW OF MERLE TRAVIS' HITS;

BANJO TUNES WRITTEN
BY EARL SCRUGGS;

AND OTHER INSTRUMENTALS
THAT ALLOWED THE COLLECTION

OF TALENTED MUSICIANS
TO SHINE.

â

EVERYONE INVOLVED FELT
A SPECIAL MAGIC IN THE STUDIO.

McEuen: WHEN
THE VIETNAM WAR WAS RAGING

AND MARCHES WERE GOING ON
AND CHURCHES WERE BEING BURNED,

IN THE MIDST
OF ALL THIS TURMOIL,

IT CAME TOGETHER
IN THE STUDIO.

[STUDIO CHATTER]

NARRATOR: ON THE LAST DAY,
ROY ACUFF HIMSELF SHOWED UP

AND ASKED TO HEAR A LITTLE
OF WHAT THEY HAD RECORDED.

HANNA: HE SAID SOMETHING LIKE,

"HOW WOULD YOU BOYS
DESCRIBE THIS MUSIC?"

AND WE'RE GOING, "WELL,
IT'S MOUNTAIN MUSIC,"

OR, YOU KNOW,
"IT'S KIND OF BLUEGRASS,"

OR, "IT'S GOT KIND OF
AN APPALACHIAN VIBE,"

AND HE SAID, "IT AIN'T
NOTHING BUT COUNTRY."

NARRATOR: THEN ACUFF THEN LED
THEM THROUGH SOME OF THE SONGS

HE HAD MADE FAMOUS
FROM THE STAGE

OF THE RYMAN AUDITORIUM
BACK IN THE 1940s.

ACUFF: NOW, WHENEVER YOU DECIDE

THAT YOU'RE GONNA
RECORD A NUMBER,

PUT EVERYTHING YOU'VE GOT
INTO IT.

DON'T SAY, "OH, WE'LL TAKE IT
OVER AND DO IT AGAIN,"

BECAUSE EVERY TIME
YOU GO THROUGH IT,

YOU LOSE JUST
A LITTLE SOMETHING,

ESPECIALLY A MAN WITH VOICE,

SO LET'S DO IT THE FIRST TIME,

AND TO HELL
WITH THE REST OF IT.

[NITTY GRITTY DIRT BAND 'S
"WRECK ON THE HIGHWAY" PLAYING]

â€ WHO DID YOU SAY
IT WAS, BROTHER? â€

â€ WHO WAS IT FELL BY THE WAY?

â€ WHEN WHISKEY AND BLOOD
RUN TOGETHER â€

â€ DID YOU HEAR ANYONE PRAY?

â€ I DIDN'T HEAR NOBODY PRAY,
DEAR BROTHER â€

â€ I DIDN'T HEAR NOBODY PRAY

â€ I HEARD THE CRASH
ON THE HIGHWAY â€

â€ BUT I DIDN'T
HEAR NOBODY PRAY â€

NARRATOR: FOR THE ALBUM'S
CLIMAX, THEY CHOSE

ANOTHER CARTER FAMILY SONG,
WHICH WOULD BECOME

THE NAME OF THE ALBUM.

MAN: "CIRCLE?" OK.

NARRATOR:
EVERYONE JOINED IN.

["WILL THE CIRCLE BE UNBROKEN?"
PLAYING]

â

MAYBELLE CARTER:
â I WAS STANDIN' BY MY WINDOW

â ON ONE COLD AND CLOUDY DAY

â WHEN I SAW THE HEARSE
COME ROLLIN ' â

â FOR TO CARRY MY MOTHER AWAY

ALL: â WILL THE CIRCLE
BE UNBROKEN? â

â BY AND BY, LORD,
BY AND BY â

â THERE'S A BETTER HOME
A-WAITIN' â

â IN THE SKY, LORD,
IN THE SKY... â

â

â

HANNA: TO GET IN THIS RECORDING
STUDIO AND MAKE A RECORD

WITH FOLKS THAT KIND OF
BRIDGED THAT CULTURAL GAP

AND THAT GENERATION GAP,
THAT WAS SIGNIFICANT.

WE HEARD STORIES LATER WHERE,
YOU KNOW, A GOOD FRIEND OF MINE

SAID THAT HE AND HIS DAD
WERE KIND OF ESTRANGED,

AND THEY SAT DOWN AND BONDED
ON THAT "CIRCLE" ALBUM.

ALL: "WILL THE CIRCLE
BE UNBROKEN?"

"BY AND BY, LORD,
BY AND BY..."

NARRATOR: RELEASED
AS A TRIPLE-DISC ALBUM,

"WILL THE CIRCLE BE UNBROKEN?"
GOT LITTLE PLAY

ON COUNTRY RADIO...

ALL: "IN THE SKY, LORD,
IN THE SKY..."

NARRATOR: BUT "ROLLING STONE"
MAGAZINE PRAISED IT.

SOME PROGRESSIVE FM STATIONS
STARTED FEATURING IT,

AND ESPECIALLY ON COLLEGE
CAMPUSES AROUND THE NATION,

IT CAUGHT ON,
SPREAD BY WORD OF MOUTH.

"

ULTIMATELY, IT WOULD
BE RECOGNIZED AS ONE

OF THE MOST ICONIC ALBUMS
IN COUNTRY MUSIC HISTORY.

ACUFF: "I WILL FOLLOW
CLOSE BEHIND HER"

"TRY TO HOLD ON
AND BE BRAVE..."

McEuen: I THINK THE SONG
"WILL THE CIRCLE BE UNBROKEN?"

SHOWS HOPE.

IT SHOWS A BETTER FUTURE
MAY BE AHEAD.

THINGS MAY BE BAD,
BUT THEY'LL GET BETTER.

"UNDERTAKER,
PLEASE DRIVE SLOW.

THAT'S MY MAMA GOING,
BUT SHE'LL BE OK."

ALL: â BY AND BY, LORD,
BY AND BY â

â THERE'S A BETTER HOME
A-WAITIN' â

â IN THE SKY, LORD,
IN THE SKY â

[WILLIE NELSON'S
"ME AND PAUL " PLAYING]

â IT'S BEEN ROUGH AND ROCKY
TRAVELING â

â BUT I'M FINALLY STANDING
UPRIGHT ON THE GROUND â

â

â AFTER TAKING
SEVERAL READINGS â

â I'M SURPRISED TO FIND
MY MIND'S STILL FAIRLY SOUND â

â

â I GUESS NASHVILLE
WAS THE ROUGHEST â

â BUT I KNOW I'VE SAID
THE SAME ABOUT THEM ALL â

â

â WE RECEIVED OUR EDUCATION
IN THE CITIES OF THE NATION â

â ME AND PAUL

â

â ALMOST BUSTED IN LAREDO

â BUT FOR REASONS THAT
I'D RATHER NOT DISCLOSE â

â

â BUT IF YOU'RE STAYING...

NARRATOR: NEXT TIME
ON "COUNTRY MUSIC,"

DOLLY PARTON MAKES IT BIG.

BRENDA LEE: DOLLY WANTED
TO BE EVERYWHERE,

AND THAT'S WHAT SHE DID.

NARRATOR: THE STORMY MARRIAGE
OF GEORGE JONES AND
TAMMY WYNETTE...

BILL ANDERSON: I THINK
PEOPLE SAW THEIR OWN
LIVES IN THESE SONGS.

NARRATOR: AND WAYLON AND WILLIE
BECOME OUTLAWS.

WILLIE NELSON: THEY WERE WILLING
TO FORGIVE US SOME OF OUR--

HEH!--MISGIVINGS, AS LONG
AS THE MUSIC WAS GOOD.

NARRATOR: WHEN "COUNTRY MUSIC"
CONTINUES.

WAYLON JENNINGS:
"â€¦ LOVES HIM IN SPITE OF
HIS WAYS SHE DON'T UNDERSTAND"

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OF COUNTRY MUSIC,

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ON AMAZON PRIME VIDEO.

â€” ME AND PAUL

â€”

â€”

â€” ON A PACKAGE SHOW
IN BUFFALO â€”

â€” WITH US AND KITTY WELLS
AND CHARLIE PRIDE â€”

â€”

â€” THE SHOW WAS LONG,
AND WE'RE JUST SITTING THERE â€”

â€” AND WE'D COME TO PLAY
AND NOT JUST FOR THE RIDE â€”

â€”

â€” WELL, WE DRANK
A LOT OF WHISKEY â€”

â€” SO I DON'T KNOW IF WE WENT ON
THAT NIGHT AT ALL â€”

â€”

â€” BUT I DON'T THINK
THEY EVEN MISSED US â€”

â€” I GUESS BUFFALO AIN'T GEARED
FOR ME AND PAUL â€”

â€”

â€” WELL, IT'S BEEN ROUGH
AND ROCKY TRAVELING â€”

â€” BUT I'M FINALLY STANDING
UPRIGHT ON THE GROUND â€”

â€”

â€” AFTER TAKING
SEVERAL READINGS â€”

â€” I'M SURPRISED TO FIND

MY MIND'S STILL FAIRLY SOUND

I GUESS NASHVILLE
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ABOUT THEM ALL

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